Commentary
VOLUME NINETY-SIX • NUMBER ONE • JULY 1993

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Patrick Glynn

Greenhouse Anxiety
Jeffrey Salmon

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Hebrew in America
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Israel Watch: The Encyclopedias
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Books in Review: Paul Johnson / Michael Fumento / Donald Lyons / Arch Puddington / Joshua Muravchik

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Assistant to the Editors: Denise Rosner

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Letters from Readers

Alger Hiss

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is typical of Sam Tanenhaus's carelessness with facts that he begins his recital of the Hiss case ["Hiss: Guilty as Charged," April] by misidentifying Alger Hiss as a former Assistant Secretary of State. Hiss was never that, although he did work in the office of Assistant Secretary of State Francis B. Sayre. Mr. Tanenhaus continues with over a dozen more serious mistakes, even managing to cram three errors into the one misstatement that Hiss "abandoned the pretense that he had not known his accuser." What Hiss had actually said, carefully and accurately, was that he had

> never heard of Whittaker Chambers. . . . The name means absolutely nothing to me. . . . I would not want to take an oath that I have never seen that man. I would like to see him and then I think I would be better able to tell whether I had ever seen him.

No pretense; nothing to abandon; and even Chambers testified that Hiss had not known him under the name Whittaker Chambers but only under a pseudonym.

Mr. Tanenhaus is meretricious in rehashing the story that Noel Field named Alger Hiss as a fellow spy to Hungarian secret police during Field's "rehabilitation" 40 years ago. Field, who had had contacts with the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and with European Communists, was held incommunicado for five-and-a-half years (1949-54) and tortured and interrogated by the Hungarian secret police. After his release, he wrote to Hiss that not the least part of the tragedy that had befallen him was that his imprisonment had prevented him "from nailing this outrageous lie" of false testimony by a perjured witness in Hiss's second trial [Hede Massing, testifying that she and Hiss had competed to recruit Field as a Soviet agent]:

> My definite and absolute personal knowledge of the complete untruth of this particular bit of evidence is the clearest proof to me—aside from my experience of your personality and outlook—of the falsehood of the rest of the "evidence" on which you were convicted.

Mr. Tanenhaus leads the reader to believe that the Hungarian interrogation dossier is a sensational new find, but then he tells us the documents are not scheduled for publication. Can that be because they were already misrepresented fifteen years ago by Allen Weinstein in *Perjury*? Weinstein's source, Karel Kaplan, repudiated Weinstein's misrepresentation. Mr. Tanenhaus proclaims that "selected documents . . . seal the case against Alger Hiss." Likewise did the prosecutor, 44 years ago, announce that the second jury's verdict against Hiss "permanently sealed the issues that were created by this case."

On issues where the documents *have* been published, Mr. Tanenhaus is demonstrably in error. For openers, he misrepresents the follow-up comments by General Dmitri A. Volkogonov, chairman of the Russian Federation's parliamentary commission on Soviet intelligence archives, concerning Volkogonov's October 1992 report that he and the Foreign Intelligence Service had "analyzed a huge amount of documents and determined as a result that Alger Hiss . . . was never a spy for the Soviet Union." Volkogonov later said that he was taken aback by the commotion his report caused, and he repeated his caution that there can be no guarantee that some files were not destroyed and said that there may be files in archives not yet examined. These comments were neither "sheepish" nor "retracting" (Mr. Tanenhaus's words), nor did they include his wishful invention that Volkogonov "admitted" he had seen only a "few documents" or that his efforts "consisted mainly of discussions with KGB employees." In reality, according to the *New York Times* reporter who interviewed him, Volkogonov was "elaborating" on his initial report but "made no retractions." Moreover, in another interview following up on his initial report, Volkogonov said that he knew from numerous documents he had seen on many spies that, "Positively, if he [Hiss] was a spy, then I believe positively I would have found a reflection in various files."

Your readers may be interested to learn that not only General Volkogonov but also archive offi-

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cials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Security, the Central Party and Comintern archives, and the Committee on Archive Matters to the Government of the Russian Federation have written since September 1992 that they found no documents incriminating Hiss.

Mr. Tanenhaus's style of argumentation is puzzling. Sample: "As for Hiss's link with the Communist party, followers of national politics knew of his inclusion in a circle of young officials of the Roosevelt administration who drew fire for subverting the policies of the New Deal." Mr. Tanenhaus does not say which "policies," or how "subverting" them related to the Communist party. Perhaps he employs the word "subverting" to suggest "subversion," as in the popular cold-war phrase "Communist subversion."

In his next sentence, Mr. Tanenhaus asserts—erroneously—that "Hiss nearly lost his job because of a legal opinion he had written" at the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA). Mr. Tanenhaus says nothing about the nature of the legal opinion or its relevance to the Communist party. He may have had in mind a much-publicized political flap in 1935 involving a legal opinion—written not by Hiss but by David Krieger, revised by Telford Taylor, and approved by Hiss—interpreting a cotton-crop contract to protect sharecroppers. The interpretation displeased cotton growers whose political clout resulted in a shake-up of the AAA, although not at the expense of Hiss, Taylor, or Krieger.

Mr. Tanenhaus then purveys a falsehood by omission: he writes that Hiss's AAA colleague Lee Pressman, whom Chambers had named as a member of the same Communist party group with Hiss in 1934-35, "eventually admitted he was a Communist." What Mr. Tanenhaus omits, however, is the important part of Pressman's testimony: that while he, Pressman, *was* a member of the group, Hiss was *not*.

A final sample of Mr. Tanenhaus's argumentation: "Hiss's dogged avowal of innocence carefully followed the line of defense prescribed by the Communist party [that] 'persons detected in espionage [must] deny everything.'"

Mr. Tanenhaus might well have derived that anti-syllogism from Representative Karl Mundt of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), who told Hiss in 1948:

> This committee never had any illusions that we would be able to prove definitely whether or not you are a Communist because, in dealing with people charged with being Communists, over a period of years we have found that those who are guilty refused to admit it and dodged the question, or deliberately lied.

A complete list of Mr. Tanenhaus's errors, omissions, and distortions would be as long as his article itself. It is not worth the effort.

JOHN LOWENTHAL
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Sam Tanenhaus's article is a textbook example of disinformation, a compendium of distortion, error, and downright falsehood. First off, much of his argument relies on material beyond documentation or verification: unpublished and unsourced material from Soviet, Russian, and Hungarian archives, as well as archives belonging to Allen Weinstein (the latter being explicitly withheld from public inspection despite repeated promises over the years that they would be deposited at the Truman Library).

Then there is the matter of Mr. Tanenhaus's claimed ability to read Whittaker Chambers's mind. . . . He speculates as to the reasons Chambers testified falsely under oath and mentions two instances of Chambers's falsehoods; but more than 60 other examples are omitted from his account.

Another problem is that of strategic vagueness. By referring interchangeably to positions taken by Alger Hiss, by his "defense," his "partisans," his "surrogates," "defenders," "champions," and "supporters," Mr. Tanenhaus obscures his meaning and is thereby enabled to play fast and loose with the facts as he totally neglects the legal evidence adduced in the Hiss case.

I have tallied 68 lies, distortions, and falsifications in Mr. Tanenhaus's article. I obviously cannot hope to be granted space, in a letter to the editor, to list them all. However, these examples will, I trust, demonstrate how thoroughly unreliable is Mr. Tanenhaus's reporting:

• Mr. Tanenhaus claims that "several acquaintances of Chambers" knew that the documents he said he had hidden in a dumbwaiter shaft for ten years were what he said they were and not, as "Hiss's defenders maintain," fakes manufactured as part of a frame-up. Nathan Levine—the only acquaintance mentioned—"knew of the documents long before he [Chambers] produced them in 1948." But it is a matter of record that Levine testified—before HUAC in December 1948 and at both Hiss trials as a witness for the prosecution—that he *never* knew what was inside an envelope he said he received from Chambers in 1938, either when he received it, during the decade he said it was in his possession, or when Chambers retrieved it in 1948.

• Hiss's testimony before HUAC, according to Mr. Tanenhaus, was "ingeniously constructed" with respect to his identifying Chambers as someone he had once known as "George Crosley." But omitted from Mr. Tanenhaus's account is Chambers's admission, under cross-examination at Hiss's trial(s), that "George Crosley" *was* a name he used in the mid-1930's and that Hiss well "may have" known him under that name. Another significant omission in this regard—in the context of Mr. Tanenhaus's insinuation that Hiss had played fast and loose with the truth—is Chambers's denial, in his testimony before HUAC in August 1948, when the issue of the name "George Crosley" was central to the Hiss-Chambers controversy, that he had ever used this name.

• In an effort at disproving Hiss's testimony that he had never known "George Crosley" to be a Communist, Mr. Tanenhaus cites Josephine Herbst (without source reference) as an acquaintance of Chambers who "knew this essential fact about him"; and as a woman "whose husband John Herrmann reportedly was present on the occasion when Chambers and Hiss first met." John Herrmann, then divorced and living in Mexico, in 1949 and again in 1953 told the FBI that he had never met Alger Hiss—and in none of Chambers's testimony or statements to the authorities did he ever say that Herrmann was present when he first met Hiss.

• I exchanged letters with Josephine Herbst shortly before she died in January 1969. She wrote

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that she met Chambers two or three times in the summer of 1934 and that she "never inquired who he really was. . . . I had the impression that he was, or might be, at least European, perhaps Austrian. . . . It was a curious time and in this country one did not make inquiries." About Chambers, on November 6, 1968, Miss Herbst wrote me: "I did not know anything about him"; and, "Neither my husband nor Chambers ever disclosed to me the nature of their connection." These letters are on deposit at the University of Michigan, along with my other papers on the Hiss case, and Mr. Tanenhaus has told me and others that he has made copies of them.

• In the summer of 1948, in his testimony before HUAC and, again, at Hiss's trial(s), Whittaker Chambers testified that Alger Hiss was his "closest friend in the Communist party." Mr. Tanenhaus echoes Chambers's testimony in reporting that Hiss "was nothing less than Chambers's best friend in thirteen years as a Communist." But Chambers's testimony (and Mr. Tanenhaus's repeating it as a fact) is put in serious question by documents released in 1976 under the Freedom of Information Act, indicating that such a claim was one of the scores of Chambers's perjuries. On March 18, 1946—in a statement withheld from Hiss at trial—Chambers told the FBI that he had "absolutely no information" that Alger Hiss was a member of the Communist party.

If COMMENTARY would be willing to grant me space, I should be very pleased to provide your readers with an additional 63 examples of Mr. Tanenhaus's grab-bag of trickery, the sort of falsification, error, and misrepresentation that enables him to contend that it is Alger Hiss's supporters who are "forever incapable of owning up to the truth."

WILLIAM A. REUBEN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I have practiced trial law for over 55 years and was fully aware of the Hiss case from its inception. From the very outset I believed there was reasonable doubt of Hiss's guilt because of the character of the renegade Communists who were witnesses against him. But then, after a thorough investigation of everything written on the subject, pro and con, I came to

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What are the facts?

Peace with Egypt is the coldest possible. For its agreement to make true peace with Israel, Egypt received the huge Sinai Peninsula in which Israel had invested over $10 billion. It had created flourishing cities, some of the most advanced military and naval installations in the world, and had developed oil fields that would have made it energy independent for the foreseeable future. Without firing a shot, Egypt received all of this, plus generous grants from the United States—$40 billion to date. What Egypt gave in return was a piece of paper. And even that was hedged. It would allow Egypt to join in an "Arab War" against Israel. The peace between Israel and Egypt, which the Israelis had envisioned to be like the peace between Germany and France, turned out, unfortunately, to be the "coldest peace" possible. It is, less of a peace than a de facto state of non-belligerence. The Israeli ambassador in Cairo is isolated and blacklisted and does not participate in any official functions of the Egyptian government. There is practically no trade between the two countries and no cultural exchange. The public sector of Egypt, which constitutes 80% of the total economy is forbidden to do business with Israel. Private enterprises are actively discouraged and often threatened when they try to become engaged with Israeli firms. Israeli firms are barred form submitting tenders for local projects. For "security reasons" Israeli firms are not allowed to participate in trade fairs. Although quite a few Israelis visit Egypt, hardly any Egyptians go to Israel since those who do wish to visit are summoned to the security police for lengthy interrogation.

Not forthcoming on diplomatic front. Many Israelis have been killed in Egypt or on the Egyptian border. The Egyptian media, including the official and semi-official press, are full of anti-Israel and anti-Jewish venom, preaching hatred and prejudice. There have been numerous instances of "crazed" Egyptian soldiers shooting up Israeli buses traveling along the border highways, to the general applause of the state-controlled media. On the diplomatic front, the Egyptians aren't any more forthcoming. Egypt spearheaded the campaign to keeping the "Zionism is racism" resolution in the U.N., contrary to U.S. wishes. Egypt exerts much effort to prevent African countries from establishing or renewing diplomatic relations with Israel. Egyptian diplomats, including Butros-Butros Ghali, now secretary general of the United Nations, lobbied fervently against the loan guarantees that Israel needed to absorb and to settle the hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees who have already arrived or will still arrive form the former Soviet Union.

"Israel's present government must be commended for proceeding with the greatest caution in the current peace negotiations."

The saving grace for Israel in its very cold peace with Egypt is that the Sinai is very large, and serves as a buffer zone. But in the Golan Heights, which the Syrians wish to have returned in exchange for "peace", and the "West Bank" and Gaza, which the Palestinians whish to have given to them as a "reward" for stopping the "intifada", there is no room at all for buffer zones. Although autonomy for the native Arab population is definitely an Israeli policy goal and a commitment under the Camp David Accords, the "West Bank" and Gaza and the Golan cannot possibly be surrendered to another sovereignty for any foreseeable future. It would make Israel totally indefensible. If the peace with Egypt is an example of what peace with Syria or with the Palestinians would look like, Israel's present government must be commended for proceeding with the greatest caution in the current negotiations and not to entrust its survival to empty promises. Only when the Arabs truly accept Israel as part of the Middle East should any further "land for peace" adjustments be considered.

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the firm conclusion that Hiss was innocent beyond any doubt.

Mr. Tanenhaus enshrines the testimony of all those Communists of the 30's and 40's who became heroes to HUAC by providing whatever statements were required to gain some modicum of respectability. HUAC itself was not worthy of belief and, of course, to the everlasting shame of the country, the case enhanced the career of the villain Richard Nixon who disgraced the office of the presidency.

I find it revealing that Mr. Tanenhaus leaves out of his COMMENTARY article a statement he made in an article he wrote last January in the *Wall Street Journal.* In that earlier article he stated that ". . . Mr. Hiss repeatedly beseeched General Volkogonov to rummage through Soviet Intelligence archives in order to establish that Mr. Hiss had not committed espionage." As a trial lawyer, it has been my experience that only an innocent person would persist in such a request. Evidently, Mr. Tanenhaus realized that it was his personal bias that was revealed by this statement, so he omitted it in the COMMENTARY article. . . .

WILBUR DUBERSTEIN
San Ramon, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Sam Tanenhaus's article presents a strong case that Alger Hiss was indeed a Communist spy, but I remain unconvinced, even though Mr. Tanenhaus's explanations of why people continue to believe in Hiss's innocence do not apply to me. I have been a conservative Republican for the past twenty years; I believe that lots of Communist spies did infiltrate the U.S. government; and I am neutral about McCarthyism. I do not claim to be an expert on this case, but I have read a few things on the subject and feel open-minded about it. Let me present my thinking so you can better understand why so many people do remain unconvinced. . . .

• Aside from the case itself, Hiss achieved much more credibility during his lifetime than Whittaker Chambers did. He earned a superb personal and professional reputation, and many people who knew him well defended him strongly to the end. By contrast, Chambers was a Communist spy who led a life of deceit. . . .

• I do not believe that yarn about Chambers hiding the film in a pumpkin patch. I suspect he planted the evidence. . . . There were five rolls of film, and three were withheld from examination by the defense and the jury, supposedly for super-secret "national-security" reasons. Not until two decades later was it revealed that one of these three rolls was completely blank, and the other two contained instructions on how to use fire extinguishers, life rafts, and chest parachutes. How do conservatives justify the withholding of this evidence for so long? . . .

• The person who organized the case against Hiss was Congressman Richard Nixon, a known fabricator of evidence. Under his direction, Howard Hunt falsified State Department cables to implicate President John F. Kennedy falsely in the assassination of Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem. . . .

• There are a few former Communist spies scattered around the world who allege that Hiss was also a spy. They have an axe to grind; maybe they are telling the truth, and maybe not. As I understand this part of the evidence, Allen Weinstein interviewed these witnesses for his book, *Perjury,* but has refused for many years to let anyone else listen to the tapes. Under such circumstances, I consider these allegations to be merely a curiosity. Just as there were indeed Communist spies in the U.S. government, so have there also been fabricators. . . .

MIKE SYLWESTER
Fredericksburg, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Sam Tanenhaus deals with the crucial issue of the timing of Whittaker Chambers's defection from Communism in rather disingenuous fashion. He notes that "On many different occasions Chambers said he had broken [with the Communist party] in late 1937." In fact, from September 1939 . . . until August 1948, Chambers gave only that date, repeating it six times to the FBI on March 26, 1946 and, under oath, to HUAC before changing it to April 15, 1938 to cover himself when government records and other items he alleged he had obtained from Alger Hiss (the so-called Pumpkin Papers and Baltimore Documents) proved unexpectedly to be dated as late as April 1 of that year.

Mr. Tanenhaus claims that Chambers's memory was "sound," except that "he had a terrible head for numbers. Dates, in particular, gave him trouble." Persons with sound memories do not have the problem of recall for critical moments of their lives that Chambers demonstrated over and over again. Such an argument fails to consider seriously the possibility that Chambers was a consummate liar in this instance as well as in many other important aspects of his life. . . .

Mr. Tanenhaus then goes on to suggest that Chambers confused the times of his break because "his defection happened gradually and was preceded by an escalation of disenchantment from which it was impossible to isolate a single, decisive incident." . . . Chambers said that when he made his final break he was living in a house near Pikesville, Maryland, to which he had moved from an apartment on Mount Royal Terrace in Baltimore. If Chambers had wanted to pin down the exact time of his break, he could have done so without too much difficulty using the ad he placed to sublet his apartment. He could also have checked his correspondence with Oxford University Press about some translation work, which he insisted took place after the break. However, the problem with that approach is that the ad in the *Baltimore Sun* ran on February 27, 1938 and the apartment was rented by mid-March, while his negotiations with Oxford were settled by March 1, 1938. In a letter of May 3, 1938 to his editor at Oxford, Chambers wrote that he had not been living at Mount Royal Terrace "for more than a month."

Furthermore, Chambers acknowledged that after his defection he was absolutely terrified of reprisals from the Russians and thus made several changes of residence, fleeing to Florida at one point, keeping a gun with him constantly, and often sitting up all night on guard no matter where he was staying. Given such overwhelming concerns for his own welfare and that of his family, one would think he would remember precisely when this highly stressful period began.

JAMES W. HAMILTON
Albuquerque, New Mexico

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Congratulations are in order for Sam Tanenhaus's "Hiss: Guilty as Charged." I would like to add two points.

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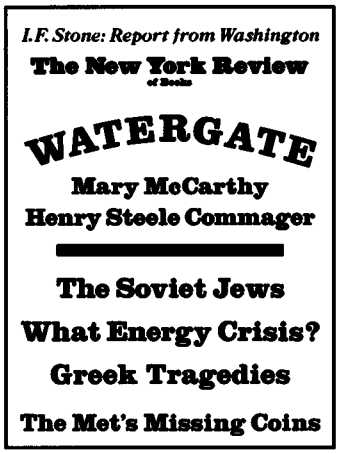

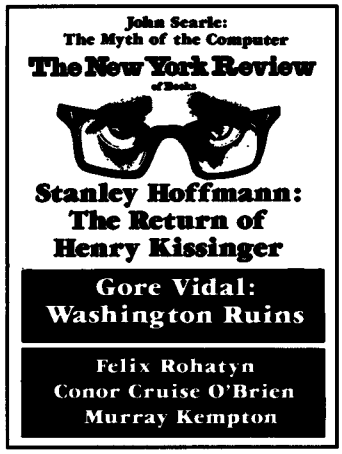

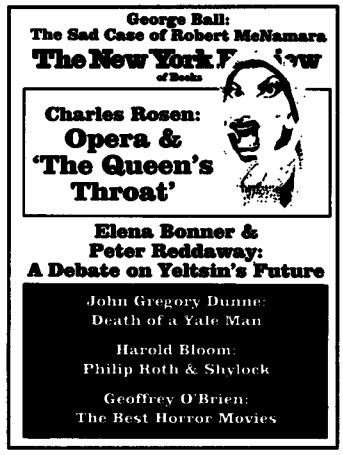

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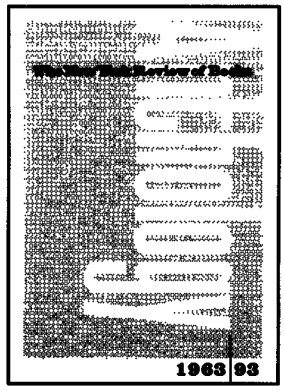

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Mr. Tanenhaus quotes from the testimony of Whittaker Chambers before HUAC. He correctly describes the testimony as ambiguous on the subject of espionage—perhaps also a veiled warning to Alger Hiss. However, when Whittaker Chambers testified before the grand jury for the Southern District of New York (1948), there was no ambiguity. He was asked whether espionage had been committed, and he denied it—a clear case of perjury. Chambers had not been in contact with Hiss for ten years. He liked and admired Hiss and hoped that during this decade Hiss had at least begun to question his allegiance to the Communist party. The Truman administration moved to indict Chambers for perjury. President Harry S. Truman did not doubt Hiss's guilt nor did he believe that Chambers's one act of perjury, however motivated, was worse than the continuing treason of Alger Hiss. His decision was purely pragmatic. Any revelations of Communist activity in government would reflect poorly on the Democratic party. With Chambers an indicted (perhaps convicted) perjurer, the main witness against Hiss would be neutralized. Then Congressman Richard M. Nixon became the prime mover in saving Chambers from an indictment.

Second, it should come as no surprise if a detailed search of KGB files turns up nothing more than a record of Chambers's membership in the American Communist party. When Chambers went into the Communist underground he never worked for the KGB (or, more accurately, its predecessor, the NKVD). He worked for military intelligence (now GRU) and for the Communist International. The latter was allegedly dissolved in 1943 as a gesture of wartime solidarity by Joseph Stalin. In reality its functions were transferred to the international department of the Communist party.

GLORIA M. STEWART
Thousand Oaks, California

SAM TANENHAUS writes:

First, a word about the new sources introduced in my article. The KGB file on the Robinson-Reubens case has been authenticated by Robert Conquest and now reposes at the Hoover Institution where it is available for inspection. The Hungarian documents examined by Maria Schmidt are being vetted for release by officials in Budapest. Mrs. Schmidt's article is in the hands of government censors, who must clear it before it can be published.

Now, the letters. John Lowenthal deems it "not worth the effort" to review all my errors. Alas, he could not even muster the energy to argue plausibly the points he did raise.

To say Hiss made no pretense of not knowing Whittaker Chambers is simply wrong. In his opening statement, Hiss declared, "I have never laid eyes on him" and then repeated, "I have never seen him." He was careful to preface both denials with a hedge—"so far as I know," in the first instance; "as far as I know," in the second. This was a protection against a future charge of perjury in the event HUAC should uncover the truth, as of course it did. Robert Stripling, HUAC's chief investigator, caught on to Hiss's tactics and so asked him point-blank if he had ever seen Chambers. Hiss replied with the remark quoted by Mr. Lowenthal: "The name means nothing to me." This evasion contradicted Hiss's previous admission that the name Chambers *did* mean something to him, for (said Hiss) Chambers's name had come up in 1947 when Hiss was interviewed by the FBI about his Communist ties.

On the AAA, see Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Coming of the New Deal*: the "opinion [was] written by Alger Hiss and approved by [Jerome] Frank." Frank, who later declined to act as a character witness for Hiss, consistently identified him as the author of the opinion. Historians are at a loss to explain why Hiss was not fired when others at AAA were let go. Schlesinger: "Alger Hiss was oddly not on [Chester] Davis's purge list, though Davis had complained particularly of him to [Henry A.] Wallace." According to a memo prepared by an AAA staffer, "Alger Hiss was not asked for his resignation because he was the cleverest of the aides to Mr. Frank and did not work in the 'open.'" Which leads to the question of subversion. Mr. Lowenthal should consult the letters exchanged in 1948 by Hiss and Robert Cruise McManus, who had been at AAA with Hiss and later confronted him with his belief that Hiss had been a Communist. (Here I should amend a point made in my article: I said that John Abt, Hiss's colleague in the AAA and the Ware group, had "deep associations with the [Communist] party." In fact, not long before his death in 1991, Abt publicly acknowledged his longstanding party membership. See the *New York Times* obituary. In addition, Harvey Klehr has called my attention to the obituary of Abt published in the *People's Weekly World*, the organ of the Communist party, which includes a tribute by Gus Hall, the party's national chairman, to Abt, a "60-year member of the Communist party.")

As for Lee Pressman, in 1948 he dismissed Chambers's charges as "the stale and lurid mouthings of a Republican exhibitionist," but when summoned by HUAC, Pressman hid behind the Fifth Amendment. In August 1950, after Hiss's conviction for perjury, Pressman made a return appearance and recanted his earlier denials. He now admitted his own membership in the Ware group, along with that of three others named by Chambers. Pressman also said, "I can state as a matter of knowledge, that for the period of my participation in that group, which is the only basis on which I can say I have knowledge, Alger Hiss was not a member of the group." This is the "important" testimony Mr. Lowenthal has in mind. But when questioned two days later by the FBI, Pressman allowed "it was quite possible that Alger Hiss might have been a member of this group." In sum, Pressman confirmed Chambers's allegation on every crucial point save one, Hiss's membership in the secret unit. But Nathaniel Weyl remembered seeing Hiss and Pressman together at cell meetings. There is another point. Those Pressman named in 1950 were, like himself, well-known Communists. Identifying them as such harmed them little even as it enabled Pressman to establish himself as a useful ally in Hiss's subsequent legal efforts. Pressman had already come to Hiss's aid during the perjury trials: Hiss's defense files record Pressman's efforts to obtain damaging information on Chambers and Hede Massing—information that came directly from the Communist party.

The Hungarian documents: Mr. Lowenthal scorns them. His colleague Victor Navasky, editor of the *Nation*, knows better. In fact, after my article appeared, Navasky directed a researcher in Budapest to look for the Noel Field file, presumably in the hope of discredit-

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ing it. Mr. Lowenthal contends Field's remarks were made under extreme duress. Once more he is confused. True, Field was brutalized by Hungarian secret police upon his arrest in 1949. However, the confessions forced out of him at that time had nothing to do with Alger Hiss. They had instead to do with allegations of an entirely different (and opposed) character—cooked-up charges that Field had betrayed his Soviet bosses by working secretly as an agent of the United States. The statements about Hiss came in 1954, when Field was released from prison. There is no reason to believe he was tortured at that time, only that he was interrogated about his personal history.

I can assure Mr. Lowenthal that there is no danger of my having "misrepresented" the papers Maria Schmidt saw: I faxed her a copy of my article before it was published and she confirmed the accuracy of what I wrote.

Mr. Lowenthal's remarks on Field himself betray a disquieting ignorance. He grudgingly concedes Field "had contacts . . . even with European Communists." This is a curious way to describe a man who boasted of having helped Stalin's assassins murder the Soviet defector Ignatz Reiss. No wonder Hiss made no use of the letter quoted by Mr. Lowenthal. Four years after writing to Hiss, Field publicly declared himself an unrepentant Communist. (See Flora Lewis, *Red Pawn.*)

I have saved for last General Volkogonov and his spurious vindication of Alger Hiss. Mr. Lowenthal is much concerned about that sorry affair since it was he who stage-managed it. Here he deserves credit. Little as he knows about the Hiss case, Mr. Lowenthal knows everything about public relations, as a recent issue of the *Nation Associate* makes clear. This newsletter explains—extols, rather—the process by which Mr. Lowenthal and his colleagues at the *Nation* contrived to elevate the general's sentimental letter to Hiss into an event of historic magnitude, a campaign premeditated even down to the manufacture of "some interesting soundbites for television." Here is the real John Lowenthal—not a scholar, not a historian, but an impresario. And he is still at it, passing off the letter from Volkogonov as a published document.

It was Volkogonov himself who owned up to the true character of his "research." He did so first in the Russian publication cited in my article. Mr. Lowenthal evidently has not read it. He relies solely on the article published in the *New York Times*—and gets it wrong. He says the report does not represent Volkogonov's follow-up remarks as a retraction. In fact, the article was headlined "Russian General Retreats on Hiss."

There appeared below that article a second in which we were told Mr. Lowenthal "indicated surprise at the general's remarks." As well he should have, since the remarks thoroughly undermined Volkogonov's initial statement. We now know, from Volkogonov's own mouth, that he spent only two days looking in the archives; that the documents he reviewed came only from the KGB—Chambers and Hiss worked for the GRU (department of military intelligence); and that he set out to determine only whether Hiss had been a "paid, contracted spy"—Chambers specifically said Hiss had volunteered his services. And we know it was Mr. Lowenthal himself, with his reckless disregard for the methods of historical inquiry, who "pushed" Volkogonov "hard to say things of which I was not fully convinced."

Now that Volkogonov's vindication has been exposed, Mr. Lowenthal seeks to bedazzle readers with other letters from various "archive officials." These too are worthless. If letters alone sufficed, there would not be today a small army of scholars working to secure the release of documents still tightly guarded in Moscow.

Mr. Lowenthal is correct on one point. Alger Hiss was never Assistant Secretary of State. The highest position he achieved was that of director of Special Political Affairs. We should all be grateful he rose no further.

I come now to William A. Reuben, author of *The Dream of Whittaker Chambers.* That manuscript is as yet unpublished, so his letter must serve as an introduction to his own peculiar dream world. Mr. Reuben makes much of the "legal evidence adduced in the Hiss case." Has he forgotten it was that evidence which sent Hiss to prison?

On the question of Chambers's withholding of information on espionage, I claimed no "ability to read" Chambers's mind. But I have read the HUAC transcript. I suggest Mr. Reuben do the same. He will find that in December 1948, after he had produced the documents incriminating Hiss, Chambers was asked why he had previously withheld them. He replied that his intent had been "to do no more injury than necessary to the human elements involved . . . to give [Hiss and the others] an opportunity to make their own break, damaged as little as possible by me." This confirms Herbert Solow's memorandum of 1938 quoted in my article.

Nor can there be any question of mind-reading in my discussion of Chambers's break with the Communist party and the date when it occurred. My article explicitly cites the sources I used.

Mr. Reuben says he has "tallied 68 lies, distortions, and falsifications" in my article. If the five examples he elaborates are representative of the remaining 63, he would be well advised to keep those others to himself.

• In his appearance before HUAC (December 10, 1948), Nathan Levine recounted the part he played in concealing the envelope in 1938 and retrieving it ten years later. Once the package was recovered, said Levine, he briefly left Chambers alone with it. But on "one occasion I came into the kitchen and he [Chambers] was standing . . . with some papers in his hands, and he uttered . . . 'holy cow' or some exclamation, 'I didn't think that this still existed,' or 'was still in existence.'"

Only someone with Mr. Reuben's powers of self-deception can fail to grasp why Chambers was excited: he had discovered documents he knew would incriminate Hiss and discredit the charges of slander. Others who knew of the papers were the journalist Isaac Don Levine, who testified about them to HUAC on December 8, 1948, and Ludwig Lore, an ex-Communist who in 1941 alerted the FBI to Chambers and his great knowledge of the Communist underground.

• What Chambers actually said was that in his years in the underground he had used so many aliases that he could not rule out the possibility that George Crosley was one of them. But he was fairly certain Hiss had known him as "Carl," as had others in Washington. Julian Wadleigh and Josephine Herbst both identified him

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by that name. Hiss, for his part, failed to produce anyone who knew Chambers as Crosley, save one witness so unreliable that Hiss dared not let him testify, so doubtful was his credibility. In any case, the name Crosley was not at all "central to the . . . controversy" once Hiss admitted having known Chambers.

• I have indeed examined copies of Mr. Reuben's letters from Josephine Herbst. But he evidently has not seen documents of much greater significance: the correspondence between Herbst and her former husband John Herrmann (at Yale); and Herbst's interviews with Hiss's attorneys (at Harvard). Herbst sympathized with Hiss, and in January 1949 met with his lawyers. They were dismayed when she gave an account of the Ware group identical to Chambers's own. She identified John Herrmann as an operative in the group and identified Chambers as Carl, an agent with important contacts both in the U.S. government and in the Soviet-controlled underground. When FBI interviewers called on Herbst in 1950, she admitted knowing Carl in 1934 as a Communist who was gathering materials for the New York office, but she covered up Herrmann's role as best she could. She immediately contacted Herrmann in Mexico and gave him "all the information he needed to make their stories coincide." So reports Herbst's biographer, Elinor Langer. Herbst's letter of warning to Herrmann is at Yale. Langer also reports Herrmann's presence at the lunch where Chambers and Hiss first met. Chambers himself was not quite sure who attended the lunch.

• The file Mr. Reuben cites has no bearing on my remark about the relationship of Chambers and Hiss. That issue boiled down to two questions: (1) were Hiss and Chambers close friends; (2) were they Communists? The answer to the first is beyond dispute. Hiss himself said he had invited Chambers to stay in his home and had given Chambers his car. Did the two men know each other as Communists? Chambers's role in the party is well-documented. That leaves Hiss: was he a Communist? Among those who have studied the evidence, only a handful think he was not, and their reasoning is typified by the deluded formulations of Messrs. Lowenthal and Reuben.

Wilbur Duberstein is right to say there were ex-Communists who made reckless and self-serving charges. But Chambers was not one of them. He testifed with reluctance and at great personal cost. (See my article, "Witness for the Truth," *National Review,* February 15, 1993.) Why, asks Mr. Duberstein, would a guilty Hiss have requested a search of Soviet intelligence archives? For the simple reason that he had nothing to lose. As I said in my article, had officials found incriminating material on Hiss, they would not have publicized it. And if we may believe Volkogonov, the search he authorized was guaranteed to turn up nothing.

Regarding the several points raised by Mike Sylwester:

• Alger Hiss's reputation was not spotless. As early as 1940, French intelligence sources had doubts about Hiss's loyalty, and in 1945 the Russian defector Igor Gouzenko made charges about leaks that pointed to Hiss. Chambers, for his part, came before HUAC not only as a self-confessed ex-Communist but also as a distinguished journalist, a senior editor of *Time* magazine.

• The microfilm also included technical information of no small interest to the Soviet Union. The other rolls contained classified State Department documents.

• Richard Nixon has uttered more than one mystifying remark about the Hiss case. But no existing evidence points to a fake typewriter or forged documents.

• I am not aware of any witnesses interviewed by Allen Weinstein who fall into the category described by Mr. Sylwester.

James A. Hamilton rehashes evidence adduced by the Hiss defense in 1952 in its attempt to secure a new trial. But other facts uncovered at the same time established that the key incident in Chambers's break with the Communist underground—his escape by car from Baltimore to Daytona Beach, Florida—occurred at the end of April 1938, well after the dates recorded on the final batch of documents Chambers received from Hiss.

There is much in my article not remarked on in these letters: the memos and statements by Herbert Solow; the testimony of Nathaniel Weyl, Felix Inslerman, William Edward Crane, and Julian Wadleigh; the Fifth Amentment pleas entered by Hiss's friends and colleagues; the memoir by Nadezhda Ulanovskaya—all of it supportive of Chambers's testimony. Readers can judge for themselves what the collective silence on these points of evidence implies about the innocence or guilt of Alger Hiss.

Finally, my thanks to Gloria M. Stewart. Both her points are correct. On the first: I emphasized the HUAC testimony because it was the first public testimony Chambers gave. On the second: see my article, "Still Guilty After All These Years," *Wall Street Journal* (January 8, 1993).

Israel & the Deportations

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his discussion of the deportation of 400 Palestinians by Israel [Israel Watch: "The Deportations," March], David Bar-Illan demonstrates an amazing ability to generalize and misinform. While there may be a defensible case, Mr. Bar-Illan fails to make it.

The context in which the deportations occurred helps explain why "the domestic response [to them] . . . was a stunning display of unanimity." As Mr. Bar-Illan himself notes, the murder of six uniformed Israelis in two weeks was unprecedented. How ironic that he chides the media for ignoring the reason for the deportations.

The inaccuracies continue. What is the "Arab side" that Mr. Bar-Illan charges with increasing terrorism and intransigence after Yitzhak Rabin's early dovish gestures? He reduces the many Arab countries and the multitude of Palestinian organizations to one entity with one single reaction. And while Rabin's reputation for security consciousness was a major part of Labor's electoral victory, is Mr. Bar-Illan really willing to overlook the weak economy and *aliyah* disaster in explaining what "enabled" Labor to win last June?

Mr. Bar-Illan gets to the heart of the matter by noting that the "near-paralysis in Hamas activities following the expulsions was palpable proof of the effectiveness of the move." He then notes that it took six weeks for Hamas to kill two more Israeli soldiers. Yet earlier he was emphasizing how few Israeli soldiers were killed throughout the *intifada*; two seems like a significant number in his framework. Indeed, should Israelis be satisfied that the two-

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year deportations of 400 people brought only six weeks of relative calm? The resurgence of violence in early March must have come as quite a shock.

There is clearly controversy about the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Israeli case, but Mr. Bar-Illan fudges the issue. Besides only touching on some of the major contentions, he quotes the late legal authority Julius Stone as saying in 1969 that Israeli expulsion of "a relatively small number of individuals" is not covered by the convention. But the 1992 expulsions were far greater in size than similar types of expulsions from 1969 or before. If anything, Stone is confirming the opposite of Mr. Bar-Illan's claim: a relatively large expulsion, say 400, *should* be covered by the convention.

When Israel destroyed the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981, it wiped out a key facility and delayed the Iraqi nuclear program. With the deportations, Israel simply erased the Hamas leadership for a few weeks or months. Those 400 Palestinians still exist, and even if they did not, there are plenty of others ready to take their place. If only dealing with opponents of Israel were as easy as Mr. Bar-Illan and his Osiraq model would have us believe.

JEREMY PRESSMAN
Carnegie Endowment for
International Peace
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It does not require profound scholarship to offer a cogent rebuttal to the charge that Israel allegedly violated the Geneva Convention of 1949 in deporting the 400 members of Hamas. All it requires is a citation of Article 5 of the convention itself, which says:

> Where in the territory of a party to the conflict, the latter is satisfied that an individual protected person is definitely suspected of or engaged in activities hostile to the security of the state, such individual person shall not be entitled to claim such rights and privileges under the present convention. . . .

The incontestable conclusion is that Hamas, by its warlike criminal activities, had forfeited any claims to protection as a "civilian" group. The UN's dependence on Article 49, which relates to "protected persons" and on which its "guilty" finding is based, is utterly disingenuous.

Thus, Israel's actions in the matter of the deportations are in full accord with the basic tenets of international law. . . .

ALFRED DESSAU
Far Rockaway, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have just filed David Bar-Illan's analysis of the Hamas deportations in my overworked "world-hypocrisy" file. The 400 deportees were instantly adopted by a similar number of CNN staff, who proceeded to glut the airwaves with endless scenes of Hamas brushing its teeth, Hamas gathering wood, Hamas at prayer, and Hamas talking on CNN. We were constantly reminded that these are family men and doctors . . . who never personally murdered a Jew (I suspect that Hitler never personally murdered anyone, either) and who were deported from *their* Palestinian homeland (never actually defined on any CNN map).

While all this was going on, seven Arabs were decapitated in Saudi Arabia, and an additional 170 were condemned to death in Algeria (events which escaped the eye of CNN). . . .

CNN's few genuine news clips are buried in endless ads for itself. Every few minutes, the voice of James Earl Jones reminds us that "THIS is CNN." Hotels which subscribe to CNN are identified by city and country: "London, England," "Paris, France," "Rome, Italy," . . . and "Jerusalem." Only Jerusalem, among all cities, does not rate a country designation on CNN. Periodically, maps depict the weather situation in capital cities: Cairo, Abidjan, Lagos, . . . and *Tel Aviv.* CNN is thus confronted by a government which (1) enjoys no form of weather whatsoever; (2) belongs to no country; (3) deports the citizens of a nonexistent Palestine; and (4) subscribes to CNN.

Meanwhile, U.S. policy continues to demand the deportation of Jews from the West Bank and Jerusalem. The Bush State Department opposed Jewish settlement, quoth James Baker, as a matter of "longstanding American policy. . . ." This is simply a lie. Washington officially opposed the Jordanian annexation of Jerusalem in 1948, but when Jordan deported the entire Jewish population of that city and replaced it with Arab "settlers," Washington said nothing. Official American silence continued throughout the subsequent post-Geneva Convention deportation (murder, rape) of 540,000 Jews from Arab lands. James Baker's "longstanding policy" was invented retroactively only in 1967.

If Israel is to remain the Middle East country which does not execute Arabs, deportation must be a viable option against fundamentalist terror. One hopes that the Rabin government will stand fast against the hypocrisy of CNN, the U.S., and all of the other cynics.

STEPHEN A. BERGER
Ramat Gan, Israel

DAVID BAR-ILLAN writes:

Jeremy Pressman's complaints are puzzling if not incomprehensible. If I understand him correctly, he states that since the murder of six uniformed Israelis was unprecedented, the media should have been absolved of reporting the reason for the deportations. Nor do I understand his objection to the use of the phrase "Arab side" in referring to Arab reaction. These particular murders may have been committed by only one terrorist group, but the Arab reaction was uniform: no condemnation of the violence and full support for the Hamas inciters and gunmen, even from their political rivals.

Mr. Pressman also protests that Labor won not only because of Rabin's security reputation. The election was so close (in fact, the popular vote went against Rabin) that any single factor can be credited for Labor's win. But even those new immigrants who voted Labor—undoubtedly protesting what they considered inadequate Likud concern—did so only because they were assured that, unlike Peres, Rabin would not compromise Israeli security. All surveys show the vast majority of new immigrants to be decidedly hawkish. Nor could the "weak economy" have played a role, for the simple reason that it was not weak at all. (See my article, "Why Likud Lost—And Who Won," COMMENTARY, August 1992.)

Speculating on how valuable the six weeks of Hamas paralysis were and on what would have happened had the deportations not taken place is an exercise in sophistry. If past experience is any indication, had the Hamas successes not been countered with a stunning blow, those six weeks could

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have witnessed a tidal wave of terrorist acts and a frenzy of adulation and support for Hamas in the Palestinian population. Arguably, the paralysis could have been prolonged had the government not been forced by the administration in Washington to compromise on the deportees. But there is no doubt that the effects on Hamas extended beyond the six weeks. Even the most vocal opponents of the deportation agree that it threw the organization into disarray, and that the elimination and capture of many of its leading terrorists during the recent closure were made possible by this disarray.

Finally, Mr. Pressman protests that 400 deportees are not the "relatively small number of individuals" referred to by Julius Stone in 1969. But the simple fact is that the 1992 expulsion was not "far greater in size than similar types of expulsions from 1969 or before." Between 1967 and 1974 well over 1,200 Arabs were expelled from the administered territories, hundreds of them (the exact number is unavailable) before 1969.

If there is one argument of Mr. Pressman's I do agree with it is that these 400 inciters "still exist." Cutting their exile time and returning them in the near future is a mistake. In the present situation they will be received as heroes and encourage an intransigent mood and more murders.

Article 5 of the Geneva Convention, cited by Alfred Dessau, to which I once referred in a *Jerusalem Post* editorial, has been given varied interpretations. What is beyond doubt is that the whole convention has absolutely nothing to do with the deportations effected by Israel. It was meant to prevent what is now known as "ethnic cleansing"—the replacement of an indigenous population by a conquering army in a war of aggression. That it is mentioned in reference to Israel's actions is yet another symptom of the "world hypocrisy" so aptly described by Stephen A. Berger.

Malcolm X

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Tamar Jacoby's article, "The Bitter Legacies of Malcolm X" [February], was disappointing. . . . Miss Jacoby dismisses Spike Lee and the power of Malcolm's philosophy in a way that is all-too-typical of someone white looking at the black community—without any deep empathy or understanding. That there are significant flaws in some of Lee's movies, few would argue. But to say that his real talent lies in being a publicist is insulting. Miss Jacoby criticizes Lee's effort to send a message to young black viewers. This, at a time when there is virtual agreement on all sides that young blacks need messages, role models, and older blacks to demonstrate concern for them. She laments the fact that Lee does not make clear whose side he is on, Malcolm's or Martin Luther King's. Why should he choose?

Miss Jacoby then descends into an ugly and unfair analysis. She says that Lee is carrying on an "old ghetto tradition": being "bad enough" to appeal to blacks but reasonable enough to collect prizes from whites. This is undoubtedly a painful dilemma for the black artist. But why should being true to one's artistic vision preclude recognition? Only because most of the forums of recognition are created by and for whites. As Paul Laurence Dunbar said so eloquently, . . . "yet do I marvel at this curious thing, to make a poet black and bid him sing."

Continuing in her insistent right to be shallow, Miss Jacoby claims that Malcolm's genius resided in his understanding of the race problem as largely "internal." No. He pointed out that the internal dynamic had to be dealt with, but he was crystal clear that the external institutional, political, and personal expressions of racism were at the core of the problem. She is the first and only person I have read who maintains that Malcolm did not experience a significant transformation in his views in Mecca.

Miss Jacoby further indulges in the classic "blame-the-victim" attitude when she says that it is black rage at white society that is responsible for cutting blacks off from opportunities. Once again she distorts history when she says that a black youth who declines to try in school, or someone who justifies rioting as understandable, is acting out Malcolm's legacy. He advocated self-discipline, study, self-control, self-reliance, industry, ini-

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tiative, self-esteem, and taking power as antidotes to racism—hardly "surface" solutions.

If the book about race relations Miss Jacoby is working on is written from the same shallow, self-serving, and insulting point of view, she will only widen the gulf that exists between many in the black community and those who purport to have some understanding of that community. . . .

ANNIQUE CAPLAN
Newton, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Tamar Jacoby's article is an excellent example of the confusion that paralyzes white America's ability to understand the black experience and black people.

Miss Jacoby draws dubious parallels and conclusions from Spike Lee's attempt to entertain while delivering a social message. But is *Malcolm X* the movie really any different from *Ben Hur*, *Gandhi*, or *Rocky*? Are the hardships of blacks as depicted in the movie any less meaningful than those expressed in the many movies on the Holocaust? I think not. . . .

I take serious issue with the implication in the article that the black race is of a single mind and can be influenced by any one individual such as Malcolm X or Martin Luther King. Miss Jacoby's belief that "black America is still looking for pride and self-worth in the dead-end notion of defiance for defiance's sake" displays a frighteningly naive perception of the struggles of black Americans. . . .

CHUCK FULLER
Atlanta, Georgia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Tamar Jacoby accurately reports many reasons to regret Malcolm X's public career, but if she is working on a history of race relations, she should reread his autobiography. After his pilgrimage to Mecca, he did more than concede a few exceptions to the rule that whites were implacable foes.

"Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and the overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practiced by people of all colors and races here in this Ancient Holy Land," Malcolm X writes in his autobiography, quoting from a letter he said he had sent to his family and followers:

> For the past week, I have been utterly speechless and spellbound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people *of all colors*.
>
> There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe could never exist between the white and the non-white. . . .
>
> You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to *rearrange* much of my thought patterns previously held, and to *toss aside* some of my previous conclusions. [Emphasis in original]

. . . Malcolm X did not live long enough for anyone to learn how far this new arc would take him. When those words were written, he had not given up his general militancy or his particular anger toward whites. . . . But just to state facts, anyone familiar with Malcolm X's own words—all of them—must see the fundamental change that was beginning to take place, what Malcolm himself described as a "radical alteration" in his "whole outlook." . . .

CHRISTOPER PAUL FOTOS
Manassas, Virginia

TAMAR JACOBY writes:

"It's a black thing, you wouldn't understand." Few phrases reveal more tellingly just how powerful Malcolm X's influence has been. Inherent racial difference, inevitable alienation, the impossibility of understanding between blacks and whites: this was the foundation of Malcolm's world view, and if it is not believed today by virtually all blacks, it is certainly the public position of a great many. I do not know if they are white or black, but both Annique Caplan and Chuck Fuller plainly begin from that assumption. I reject it out of hand—as I reject the whole notion that I cannot understand men or French people—and I can think of few ideas more dangerous for either blacks or whites.

Nor do I believe, as many do on both sides of the color line, that it is unacceptable for whites to criticize black people—or black movies. Certainly young blacks need role models; they need what Miss Caplan calls "messages" and history lessons. But that does not mean I have to like Spike Lee's movie or his message. Mr. Fuller thinks Lee's *Malcolm X* is no worse than *Gandhi* or *Ben Hur*. I didn't think that either of them was very good, and I wouldn't hesitate to say so. Why shouldn't I be able to say the same of *Malcolm X*?

On a more substantive point—Malcolm's view of whites after he returned from Mecca—I suggest that Miss Caplan and Christopher Paul Fotos dig a little deeper into history. Wishful journalists and other white liberals tried desperately at the time to convince themselves and others that Malcolm was indeed turning a more benign face toward white people. Two letters from Mecca and his much-doctored autobiography lent some credence to this view. But in truth, what happened in Mecca has been greatly exaggerated—an exaggeration that serves neither his loyal followers nor white romantics.

True enough, Malcolm's letters from Mecca reflect a momentary stirring of doubt about his long-held conviction that all white people were inherently "devils." But this was not a doubt he allowed to grow, or one that he acted upon in any way. Even in Mecca, at his most forgiving moment, the new dispensation was extremely limited: restricted to those white people who happened to be Muslims.

Returning to America, confused and under pressure to please followers, the uncertain young militant was unable to escape his old hateful dogma. Whatever he thought of light-skinned Saudi Arabians, he remained convinced that American whites were racist, and that they would remain irredeemably so—unless they converted *en masse* to Islam. He continued to mock those, black and white, who advocated a color-blind view of humanity. And he continued to talk of white America as a collective monolith—not as diverse individuals, some more open-minded than others, but rather, all for one, as an implacable enemy. "I'm not saying all of them are bad," he conceded to one interviewer in this period. "There might be some good ones. But we don't have the time to look for them. Not nowadays."

Most telling, despite an occasional flicker of common humanity, Malcolm X remained committed to race war—war to be waged against all whites, because, given

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his collective view, all were guilty. He continued to advocate the use of guns and other weapons, to glorify rioting, vigilantism, and what he chillingly called "the language of brutality and power and retaliation." It was almost as if, in the wake of a weak moment in Mecca, he had to talk more violently than ever in order to protect his image in the eyes of tough young followers. "Negroes are the victims of violence every day," he said in one late interview, "so I'd rather get violent right along with the white man."

The historical record on this matter is quite plain. For every line from Mecca hinting at a new openness, there are a number of subsequent speeches and public comments to the contrary. I refer Miss Caplan and Mr. Fotos to the last interviews (now available in book form) and to Peter Goldman's excellent and generally sympathetic biolgraphy, *The Death and Life of Malcolm X.* As the young militant himself put it, shortly before his death: "The white man asks the question is there a New Malcolm X. . . . Which means I'm supposed to change before white people change. As long as there's an old problem, the same old problem, I don't see how there can be a New Malcolm X." And here he laughed, hard and humorless. "Or a new any other kind of black man."

Of all Annique Caplan's charges, none strikes me as sadder or more perverse than her assertion that my article is "self-serving." Neither I nor any other American white benefits from the sorry state of race relations; we too lose out, and tragically so, when young blacks give their lives over to resentment, declining to try in school or to obey the law because they feel that is "giving in" to white people. Certainly, I wish that Malcolm or some other leader with his power could convince young blacks that all white people were not the enemy. But I don't see how it helps anyone to pretend that he did so, or to glorify the rest of the bitter legacy he left behind.

Term Limits

To the Editor of Commentary:

Terry Eastland's recap of the term-limits movement ["The Limits of Term Limits," February] ends with an observation easily turned into a provocative question: how will "a measure [term limits] that affects only tenure in office, as opposed to the powers exercised in office, . . . markedly alter the nature of modern government"? But the solution to the problems of government today is most assuredly *not* to be found in a "strong presidency," Mr. Eastland's advocacy of such in his book, *Energy in the Executive,* notwithstanding.

Contrary to Mr. Eastland's assertion, the size and penetration of the federal government are not the source of the trouble, but merely symptoms of a deeper malady . . . that cuts across conservative and liberal political ideology. What ails modern government is the professionalization of American politics—a development incompatible with the essence of civic republicanism.

Although it may be useful for a society to encourage the development of "professional" lawyers, nurses, social scientists, physicians, journalists, or think-tank fellows, the qualities and characteristics associated with being a "professional politician" run counter to the deeply-rooted goals of representative democracy. In a great many arenas, but especially in Congress, the professionalization of American politics is nearly overwhelming. . . .

The exercise of a profession entails a set of role relationships between "experts" and "clients" in which the "professional" is an expert who offers knowledge and judgment to clients. The culture of professionalism disconnects and distances the professional from those whom he intends to serve. Professionals are detached from their clients by expertise, education, and culture. Authority, autonomy, and hierarchy are the recurrent themes characteristic of professional status.

Conversely, representative government must be characterized by a close connection between the representatives and the represented. Representative government, not just congressional government, aspires to minimize the distance or space between the two sets of citizens. . . .

Where Mr. Eastland counsels the further aggrandizement of presidential power, in clear contradiction to the intention and design of the Constitution, term-limits advocates wish merely to re-

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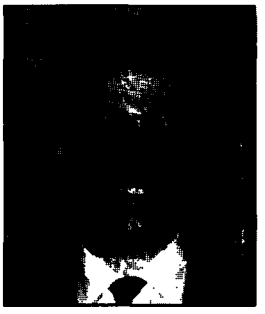

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cover a principle of republican design once widely advocated by America's revolutionaries and constitutional Framers. . . .

The adoption of term limits will *not* produce more Republican-dominated legislatures, necessarily reduce the size of the federal government, or cure all that ails American politics. However, it *will* change the incentives of those who aspire to serve in public office, which will in turn change their behavior and change the orientation of political institutions. . . .

The advantages of rotation in office, so persuasive to the Framers (Hamilton's objections notwithstanding), remain applicable to the modern era of representative government: to check the abuse of public power, increase the opportunity for citizens to serve in public office, and enhance the overall quality of political representation.

Big government, whether promulgated by Lyndon Johnson or Ronald Reagan, is not what disables American politics. What disables America's political institutions and increasingly frustrates the polity is the reason that government has grown so big—the professionalization of America's politicians who have built entire careers by building up the size and complexity of the American state. Term limits cuts right to the heart of this insidious development, a problem which Mr. Eastland's energetic executive could only worsen.

MARK P. PETRACCA
University of California
Irvine, California

TERRY EASTLAND writes:

For the record, I should note that I did not oppose term limits in my article, but wrote that "the benefits of the reform [term limits] are in danger of being oversold." As for Mark P. Petracca's major point, I doubt that the professionalization of American politics is *the* cause of the big government we have today; again, the people themselves are a major part of the story, for they *like* big government and seem inclined to keep it, as they have yet to support major structural cuts and reforms in the federal establishment. Would having more new people more often in Congress lead to building *down* "the size and complexity of the American state"? Perhaps, but I remain skeptical that term limitation by itself would produce a significant build-down.

As for Mr. Petracca's cryptic effort to review my recent book, *Energy in the Executive: The Case for the Strong Presidency*, that book by no means counsels "further aggrandizement of presidential power, in clear contradiction to the intention and design of the Constitution." Nor, as he seems to imply, is "[my] energetic executive" that of modern liberalism, whose understanding of the presidency, as I state in the book, "can encourage Presidents to ignore constitutional limits or run roughshod over them by trying to mass the powers of government in order to take care, as they define appropriate care, of the American people."

Mr. Petracca has read my article; I trust he will read my book.

AIDS & the Schools

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Midge Decter ["Homosexuality and the Schools," March] pounced on the underlying incoherence of gay-rights propagandists with characteristic precision: "While people must do everything to avoid getting AIDS, no one already suffering from it is to be held responsible." No honest man can urge his fellows to take responsibility for actions of life-and-death gravity, and at the same time pretend those are blameless who show homicidal recklessness regarding these same actions. Solicitude for those brought low by AIDS is praiseworthy; contempt for the impostures of the HIV-education scam is a sign of elementary moral sanity.

PAUL V. MANKOWSKI, S.J.
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Implicit in the arguments favoring "safe sex" and condom-distribution programs in the schools are two misguided assumptions: (1) teen sex and pregnancies result from "ignorance"; and (2) it is the legitimate function of the schools to dispense contraceptives.

Regarding the first assumption, a study by Dr. Luella Klein of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists found that teen sex and pregnancies are less the result of "ignorance" than of loneliness, lack of self-esteem, peer and societal pressures, and lack of good character. For the most part, teenage girls become pregnant because they want someone to love and someone to love them in return.

Concerning the second assumption, it is the proper responsibility of parents and physicians—and not the schools—to provide children with medical information and medication; consequently, when schools supply children with contraceptives, they transcend their legitimate function, undermine parental rights, responsibility, and authority, and simply address the symptoms rather than the root cause of the problem, which is our popular sexual attitudes and practices. For too many, sex—instead of being the communion of life and love within the sacrament of marriage—is simply a tool of masturbatory and voyeuristic gratification. . . .

HAVEN BRADFORD GOW
Arlington Heights, Illinois

Montaigne

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Given the number of good books unread in my library, I hope my sense of the extraordinariness of Joseph Epstein's article, "On Reading Montaigne" [March], is conveyed by the fact that, on reading Epstein, I couldn't order Montaigne's *Essays* fast enough.

DOUGLAS F. GLANT
Young Presidents' Organization
Seattle, Washington

Population Growth

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of Paul Kennedy's book, *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century* [Books in Review, April], Irwin M. Stelzer implicitly assumes that government efforts to control the planet's spectacularly proliferating population would somehow violate Adam Smith's laissez-faire economic doctrine. After a topic sentence disparaging Kennedy's disparagement of laissez-faire policies, he dismisses the population problem with this contemptuous statement, "Populations are growing more quickly than planners think desirable. . . ."

Mr. Stelzer is, willy-nilly, parroting the Reagan administration's benighted faith in free markets as a social panacea. But this belief comes not from the rational Adam Smith, whose *Wealth of Nations* contains no such implication, but from simple-minded ideologues

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who have stretched Smith's basic thesis far beyond its breaking point.

Consider a few basic statistical facts. It took our species roughly 10,000 centuries to reach a world population of 1 billion, some time around 1800. We have added our latest 1 billion, to reach our current world population of 5.5 billion, in just one decade. In Africa, the world's economic and political basket case, the average woman bears more than six children.

Can anyone in his right mind believe that any kind of human welfare is compatible with this population assault?

C.W. GRIFFIN
Phoenix, Arizona

IRWIN M. STELZER writes:

C.W. Griffin obviously feels strongly that something should be done to reduce the growth of the world's population. I assume he excludes from possible control methods the draconian steps taken by the People's Republic of China, and prefers spreading information about and increasing the availability of voluntary birth-control techniques. No objection here. But that leaves unanswered the question I raise in my review: "Why are Japan's people a 'skilled' resource, Zaire's a burden?"

In his zeal to smite Ronald Reagan's "benighted faith in free markets," Mr. Griffin ignores the fact that those countries which maintain free markets have no problem of "overpopulation." That tragedy is reserved for statist, centralized governments which manage to dissipate any gains that come from foreign aid, population control, or anything else. China, for example, has been engaged in population control for years, an effort that had no significant effect on living standards—nothing like the impact of its decision to move to a market economy. Then, with the same people, same resources, same population policies that had produced grinding poverty, living standards soared.

On the other hand, I have nothing against people trying to explain to other people the virtues of using condoms. But if Mr. Griffin thinks that this will have any effect in Africa, I think he should think again: these are people whose lives are being destroyed by governments that decimate the agricultural sectors of their economies, and by Western governments that then compound the crime by periodically donating free agricultural products, thereby adding to the distress of local farmers.

So, to answer Mr. Griffin, yes, someone in his right mind can indeed think that human welfare is compatible with any reasonable projection of population growth—if markets are allowed to allocate resources efficiently.

Crime Statistics

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Arch Puddington's insightful review of *Paved With Good Intentions* by Jared Taylor [Books in Review, February] is marred by his acceptance of Taylor's astonishing claim that "in 1988 there were over 9,406 cases of black-on-white rape, whereas there were fewer than ten cases reported in which blacks were the victims of whites." In fact, there were also fewer than ten cases of black-on-white rape reported that year, because the reports come from the National Crime Victim Survey (NCVS) which, to estimate crime nationwide, samples 60,000 households each year. That Taylor made an error was confirmed to me by William Wilbanks, the author whose article Taylor cited as the source of his 9,406-to-10 statistic; according to Wilbanks, the 1988 sample of interracial rape was based on fewer than ten cases, a number too small to have any statistical validity.

To ascertain the real data, I looked at all the NCVS reports since the first one in 1973. It turns out that, on average, about 9 percent (or 2,200 a year) of the rapists reported by blacks were white. By contrast, about 19.5 percent (or 19,800 a year) of the rapists reported by whites were black—still quite a substantial difference. Discussions of the causes for this disparity would be taken more seriously if they were based on the actual figures rather than on the wild claim that black-on-white rapes are at least 1,000 times more prevalent than white-on-black rapes.

JOHN SARICH
Sacramento, California

Denazification

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In your February issue, you published a letter by Andrzej Nowak which, without mentioning my name, undoubtedly alludes to my article, "In the Shadow of the Past," which appeared in the Polish journal *Tygodnik Powszechny*. In his letter, Mr. Nowak claims that my article rejects "the very idea of denazification in postwar Germany." . . . This is a false and misleading interpretation which is harmful to the respected and worthy journal in which it appears.

I would like to explain that my article aimed at the whole complex process of denazification in postwar Germany. The article explicitly pointed out that the effects of denazification were far different from what the triumphant superpowers intended. Denazification requires, among other things, conscious participation on the part of the whole society in the process of reeducation and above all a unanimous condemnation of the past. In citing the example of East Germany, I was attempting to point out that one cannot escape from historical reality. What my article meant to say, despite Mr. Nowak's obvious misinterpretation, is that denazification cannot be an act of administering punishment. On the contrary, it is a long-drawn-out process which consists of acknowledging the wrongs that have been done and drawing conclusions from certain historical experiences. These are prerequisites for building a stable German democracy within a reunited Germany.

ANNA WOLFF-POWESKA
Instytut Zachodni
Poznan, Poland

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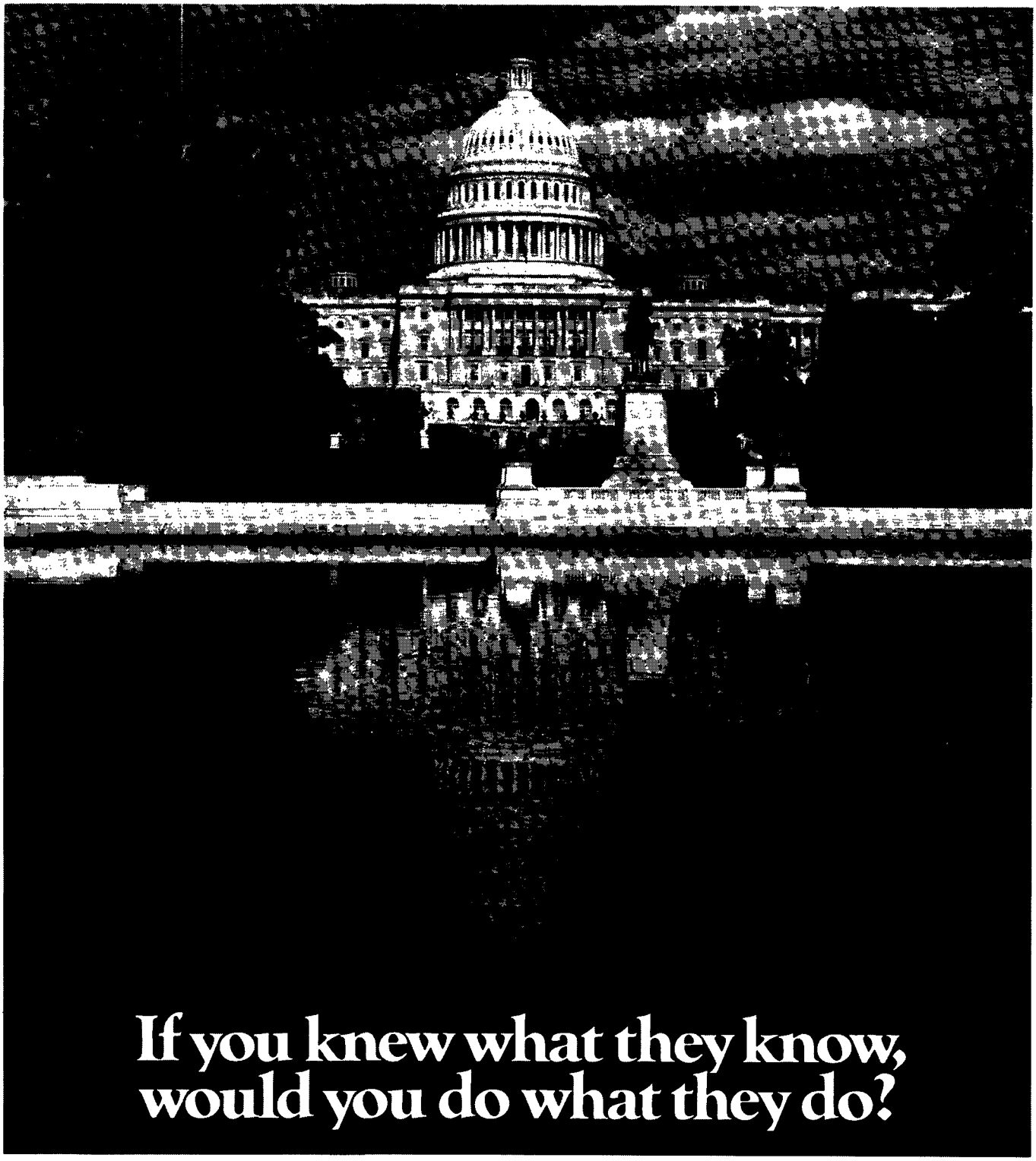

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The Age of Balkanization

Patrick Glynn

TODAY a fundamental change is under way in the character of global political life. A new era is in the making. Gone or fading are the great bipolar conflicts—between democracy and fascism, between democracy and Communism, and even perhaps between Left and Right—that shaped war and peace in the 20th century. In their place a new political struggle is emerging—more complex, more diffuse, but nonetheless global in character.

On every continent, in almost every major nation, and in almost every walk of life the overriding political reality today is that of increasing social separatism and fragmentation—a sometimes violent splintering of humanity by ethnic group, race, religion, and even (to a less dramatic extent) such characteristics as gender or sexual orientation. While the causes of this phenomenon are as yet imperfectly understood, its implications could hardly be more far-reaching.

The most dramatic manifestation of the change is found, of course, in the countries that used to be known as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, and it is also showing itself in other parts of the defunct Soviet empire, not to mention the old Soviet Union itself. But the phenomenon is not merely one of Communism giving way to nationalism, nor is it confined to the old Communist world.

Indeed, everywhere one sees well-established nation-states threatened with disunion, and even in countries without explicit separatist movements, the unifying themes of political life are increasingly under attack. Canada copes with Quebec's secessionism, the United Kingdom with Scottish separatists, Italy with increasing tensions between its north and its south. In Germany, as well as in France and Britain, ethnically motivated violence has become a major factor in politics, and rebellious youths are inflamed by a puzzling new ideology of ethnic hatred.

Even in America—the proverbial melting pot—racial, ethnic, and other varieties of separatism are distinctly on the rise. Blacks assert their identity as "African-Americans"; homosexuals discover in their sexual orientation a basis for political action; Christian fundamentalists exert more and more influence as an organized political force.

Nor is this phenomenon merely political. It also finds its reflection in the highest reaches of contemporary culture and intellectual life. The controversial doctrine of "multiculturalist education" and the "postmodernist" philosophy now so current in American universities are both essentially codifications of the new experience of fragmentation.

Side by side with this splintering, paradoxically, has gone a fresh drive for unity. As the cold war was ending, George Bush, then still in the White House, hailed the advent of a Europe "whole and free," and in the lead-up to the Gulf war he spoke hopefully of a "new world order." Since then, European Community leaders have worked to forge a unitary Europe, while Germany's leadership has sought to make one nation out of two. In Russia, Boris Yeltsin fights a parallel battle, desperately trying to hold Russia together while moving toward democracy in the face of radical nationalism and mounting pressures for regional secession.

But these efforts at unification—including the effort to posit a new world order based on common democratic values—have thus far proved unable to stem the powerful counter-currents rooted in separatist identities. For this new cultural struggle is taking place not only within nations, but among them. Attempts to expand the postwar liberal trading order have been frustrated by intensified cultural conflict between America and Japan and, to a lesser extent, between America and Western Europe. Islamic fundamentalism poses a threat to moderate Arab regimes and increases the likelihood of eventual armed conflict between the West and radical Arab states.

Slowly this clash between, on the one hand, ethnic (and other types of) particularism and, on the other hand, what might be called democratic universalism seems to be replacing the old Left-Right and class polarities that have governed political life for nearly a century. It has every appearance of becoming the new bipolarity of global politics, the new dialectic of a new age.

PATRICK GLYNN, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is the author of *Closing Pandora's Box: Arms Races, Arms Control, and the History of the Cold War.*

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WHAT are the reasons for this great shift? The most obvious cause would seem to lie in the collapse of Soviet Communism. Communism repressed national differences; indeed, Marxist-Leninist ideology, rooted as it was in Enlightenment economic thinking, defined national and ethnic differences as epiphenomenal, stressing instead the primacy of class. Under Communism, nationalism was either disguised or stifled.

What we have seen since the breakdown of Communism—whether in the former Soviet Union, the former Yugoslavia, or the rest of Eastern Europe—is, to borrow a phrase from Sigmund Freud, a "return of the repressed," a resurgence of powerful national and ethnic feelings which had been simmering angrily beneath the surface.

But if Communist regimes ruthlessly imposed unity on their own peoples, they also evoked a more or less united response from the outside world they threatened. The unitary nature of the Communist threat inspired an unprecedented degree of cooperation—under American leadership—among heretofore uncooperative states. European adversaries laid aside age-old grudges to join NATO. New security relationships were forged among the United States and major Asian nations, including Japan.

To be sure, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt had earlier sought on their own initiative to structure a more or less unified world order, to export America's stated principles of ethnic tolerance, and to bring the many nations of the world together on the basis of common interests and goals. But it is far from clear that, absent the Soviet threat, so many disparate nations would have been so successful in achieving collaboration, not just on trade but on a host of diplomatic and security matters, as they were during the cold war. Long ago the sociologist Georg Simmel posited that human societies were cemented together by the need to cope with outside threats. This was clearly true of what we used to call the "free world."

Even within American politics, the anti-Communist imperative had a powerful unifying effect. It produced, albeit intermittently, bipartisanship in foreign policy. It also, at various times, unified each of the two major parties. In the early years of the cold war, the Democrats, and in the later years, the Republicans, found a basis for party solidarity in the anti-Communist cause. So much was this the case that when the Democrats and then the Republicans experienced ruinous internal division, it was owing in part to a perceived or real diminution of the Soviet threat—for the Democrats during the late 1960's and early 1970's, when many believed the cold war to have become obsolete, and for the Republicans in recent years, when it became plain that the cold war was in fact over.

The Republican case is especially interesting, for what else but fear of the Soviet threat could finally have held together the diverse elements of Ronald Reagan's winning electoral coalition: Christian fundamentalists, Jewish neoconservative intellectuals, free-market libertarians, blue-collar Democrats, and traditional Republican voters? Should it surprise us that with the subsidence of the Soviet threat, old party alignments would weaken? Is it illogical that with external dangers reduced we would turn inward as a society and discover social and political differences among one another that we had previously been willing to overlook?

Yet while the collapse of Soviet Communism remains the signal event of our age, many of the trends we are discussing were apparent before the Berlin Wall came down. Ethnic, national, and racial awareness was already growing, on both sides of the iron curtain. Here in America, for example, the multiculturalist movement—now so famous and controversial for its advocacy of heightened ethnic and racial consciousness in schools—was already making inroads into secondary and higher education. On both sides of the iron curtain, faith in central authority was declining and had been declining for some time. Even before the advent of Mikhail Gorbachev, Western Sovietologists debated whether Communist leaders still actually believed their ideology. Ironically, a weakening in the influence of received values—society's traditional unifying ideas—was apparent in our own culture as well, observed by intellectuals and documented by opinion polls.

IN OTHER words, it is hard to say whether the demise of Soviet Communism is the ultimate cause of the change we are witnessing, or whether Soviet Communism itself fell victim to some vaster trend, some grand Hegelian shift in human consciousness.

Certainly the contemporary experience of social and political fragmentation was foreshadowed by new directions in intellectual life, long before the social consequences were apparent. One of the major proponents of "postmodernist" thinking, Fredric Jameson of Duke University, has written of the postmodern idiom in contemporary literature:

> Perhaps the immense fragmentation and privatization of modern literature—its explosion into a host of distinct private styles and mannerisms—foreshadow deeper and more general trends in social life as a whole. Supposing that modern art and modernism—far from being a kind of specialized aesthetic curiosity—actually anticipated social developments along these lines; supposing that in the decades since the emergence of the great modern styles society has itself begun to fragment in this way, each group coming to speak a curious private language of its own, each profession developing its own private code or idiolect, and finally each individual coming to be a kind of linguistic island, separated from everyone else?

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Behind this new experience of cultural and intellectual fragmentation lies a loss of faith in general truths, and even, at its most radical, a loss of faith in the very possibility of general truths. Notably, the most sophisticated humanities instructors in our major universities today will no longer venture to assert that a proposition is "true," merely that it is "productive" or "intriguing," i.e., a basis for reflection or intellectual play. This premise lends a notable arbitrariness to "postmodern" modes of expression, robbing contemporary literature, criticism, and even philosophy of a certain weight, authority, or seriousness.

The same mixture of posturing and pastiche has become evident in our political discourse (think back to Bush's Gulf war speeches). However glorious the phrases—"freedom," "tyranny," "new world order"—they are uttered today with a certain self-conscious nostalgia.

We have lived through an era when people attached themselves to grand ideas—whether for good or for evil—and fought and sometimes died for them. But for some reason these ideas collectively seem to be losing their force. Such is the defining tendency of our age.

The resulting fragmentation is far from being a propitious development. At stake, one could argue, is the future of civilization itself. The struggle for civilization has always been a struggle for unity, universality, ecumenism. The great ages of civilization have been periods of concord and commonality, when large tracts of the globe were more or less united by common values, and sometimes even by a common language and common laws—the Roman empire, the era of Charlemagne, the Renaissance, the 19th-century Concert of Europe. These periods have been succeeded in turn by periods of fragmentation, factional strife, and relative barbarism: the Dark Ages, the feudal era, the Reformation with its religious wars, and of course the long "civil war" that wrenched Europe between 1914 and 1945. Looking back, one can see that Western history has been marked by a cyclical pattern in which unifying ideas triumph, only gradually to lose their hold on the imagination and to be replaced by factional struggle and particularism.

It is possible that we are on the threshold of a new such cyclical turn.

At the root of the problem lies the very large and very deep question of human identity. In a sense, the master-idea of Western civilization is the view that the identifying feature of the human being qua human being is the faculty of reason. When the Greek philosophers hit upon this notion of man as the rational animal, they made possible the creation of large political orders on a basis other than that of pure despotism.

Furthermore, as Socrates and his students saw, this conception transcended differences of nationality and race: rational man could not be defined as Athenian or Spartan or even Greek or barbarian. And with this insight, the philosophers ceased to be good citizens of their cities, their *poleis*, at least in the terms of those cities: they became citizens of the rational universe—to use a somewhat later term, cosmopolitans—and they challenged the laws and gods of their fellow citizens.

It was this cosmopolitan vision, as Hans Jonas pointed out in his famous study of the gnostic religion, that helped define the ambitions of Alexander the Great. Alexander, a student of Aristotle, created the first great Western empire—the Hellenic empire—based on universalist principles. He was the first leader to unify the "West."

The Romans, having imbibed Greek learning, revived and reinstitutionalized Greek rationalism as they gradually transformed themselves from a republic into an empire. By the time of the early empire, to be a Roman citizen—a *civis Romanus*—no longer meant to belong to the tribes of the Romans. Now it meant to fulfill certain formal and legal requirements of citizenship, often through military service. Thus Paul, an ethnic Jew who became a Christian, could also be a Roman citizen. By the 3rd century, Roman citizenship was extended to all freemen of the empire.

This unifying idea allowed for the organization of a vast political system that granted a measure of freedom to individuals while protecting the general peace: the *pax Romana*. Systematically, step by step, the Romans replaced local laws rooted in local cults and customs with Roman law, which was rational, universal, and said to be derived from the law of nature, rationally understood. It is from *civis* that our word "civilization" comes.

For more than 1,000 years after the disintegration of the empire, tumultuous Europe looked back on imperial Rome as the lamented Golden Age. Hence the ambition of the greatest statesmen of Europe was to recreate the unity of Rome on whatever scale they could. That was the signal achievement of Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, who unified a large region of Europe stretching from south of the Pyrenees to the Elbe, placed it under more rational administration, and was crowned emperor of the West in his time.

Charlemagne, however, was unable to secure his legacy, and slowly Europe descended into feudalism and the wars of the barons. Yet over time the Church—which had been touched by classical culture from the beginning, and which explicitly assimilated the Greco-Roman idea through the work of Aquinas and others—became a more rational and more catholic institution, providing a measure of unity to European life. This in turn prepared the stage for the full recovery in the Renaissance of the classical idea of rational man.

Periods when this idea of man is in the ascendancy have been the great periods of civilization as we in the West know it. It is during such periods that peace reigns, learning spreads

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and advances, and the arts flourish. Yet experience shows that this idea does not hold indefinitely.

Perhaps the reason simply has to do with the inherent restlessness of human beings. When it first appears on the scene, the idea of rational man has a demythologizing force; it is an exploder of myth. Socrates' notion of rational man was subversive of the laws, customs, and gods of Athens—which is why he was condemned to death by his fellow citizens. Roman law, too, was subversive of local traditions and local religions; it was the "modern" idea of its era. The Renaissance was anti-traditional in the same sense—introducing ideas from the classics that raised questions about Christian beliefs.

Perhaps human beings have an overriding need for myth, or perhaps the act of demythologization always contains within it the seeds of its own destruction. At any rate, periods of demythologization tend to be followed by periods of remythologization. Secular, rationalistic Hellenic culture was eventually challenged by the religious intensities and excesses of gnosticism. Roman imperial rationality gradually gave way to Christianity. The rationality of the Renaissance gave way to the religious wars of the Reformation.

Remythologization and reversion to ethnic particularism have tended to go hand in hand. People cease to find satisfactory selfhood in large unities, become alienated from the larger whole, and begin to seek identity in smaller units. Such periods are characterized by diminished will on the part of those who stand for reason to defend reason, by a diminished appeal of reason to the human imagination. Civilization is destroyed by those whose attachment to religious or ethnic identity gives them the zeal which the defenders of reason come to lack. Civilization falls victim to barbarians from without and zealots from within. In such periods, as Yeats famously wrote, "The best lack all conviction, while the worst/ Are full of passionate intensity."

THERE are hints of all this in the emerging mood of our own time. The ferocious war in the Balkans is but one manifestation of a reemergent barbarism apparent in many corners of the earth. In the Balkans, the voices of the rational and the tolerant—for example, officials of the secular-minded Bosnian government—have been drowned out by the guns of ethnic fanatics. Efforts to secure democracy on the basis of rational Western principles have been crushed by the bloodthirsty exponents of "ethnic cleansing."

The new barbarians differ fundamentally from the old enemies of liberal democracy in feeling no need to justify themselves before the court of reason. The Communists, too, practiced barbarism, but they harbored a powerful imperative to vindicate themselves on the basis of some general truth: hence their elaborate ideology. Paradoxically, it was to prove they had the truth that they fashioned huge tissues of lies. Much the same was true of the Nazis, who invented the technique of the Big Lie.

The new tyrants—such characters as Slobodan Milosevic, Radovan Karadzic, or for that matter Saddam Hussein—feel no such pressures. They offer as justification for their actions the thinnest pretexts. Their explanations are less an appeal to reason than a pure gesture of defiance.

Precisely because these tyrants lack intellectual seriousness, we are likely to discount them. But we forget that the great ideological struggle that characterized most of our century was the exception rather than the rule in history. Usually the enemies of civilization have not been so intellectually well-armed as the Communists (and even, in their way, the Nazis) were; but despite this they have often succeeded in prevailing. The once-mighty Romans, after all, were finally defeated by forces culturally, intellectually, and technologically inferior to them.

Like the Romans, we have been slow to understand the nature of the incipient threat. Indeed, only now are we beginning to see the gravity of the issues at stake when tyrants motivated by nothing more complicated than primitive ethnic fanaticism are allowed to get away with mass murder.

Nor is this problem merely one of foreign policy or regional conflict.The very idea of rational man—the cardinal concept of our civilization—is, as we have already seen, under explicit attack in our own universities. Our students are today being taught that such categories as "African-American," "female," or "person of color" are in effect more fundamental than the category of American, let alone of rational man, the human being qua human being.

While the motives and consequences may be vastly different in the two cases, the multiculturalist doctrine that is fragmenting our universities as well as our intellectual life, and the "ethnic cleansing" of the Serbs, belong to the same troubling cultural and historical moment.

It is especially disturbing that this should be happening here, for America has always been the most rationally constituted of nations. It is the heir and perfecter of the great Roman idea of the *civis*, a country where nationality has nothing to do with ethnicity, a nation which has fought, through civil war and great domestic turmoil, to realize, however imperfectly, the principle of universality and tolerance.

We are now in an age that will move either toward ever greater fragmentation and violence or toward the ever wider spread of the tolerance and rationality by which we in the West have learned to live and prosper. As was true for most of this century, it is American leadership that will determine the path that history finally takes.

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Greenhouse Anxiety

Jeffrey Salmon

OF ALL the environmental calamities that might be visited on the earth, none has attracted more attention or aroused more fear than global warming. Countless newspaper and television reports have warned us that mankind is altering the earth's delicate thermostat by spewing tons of carbon dioxide (CO_2) into the atmosphere, mainly by burning coal and oil. According to the global-warming theory, CO_2—along with other man-made gases such as methane—will enhance the earth's natural "greenhouse effect" to the point of an uncontrollable temperature rise, leaving civilization reeling under the double punishment of farmland drought and catastrophic flooding caused by melting polar ice caps.

On the face of it, the greenhouse effect would seem to be an unlikely candidate for the apocalypse. After all, most predictions suggest the earth's temperature might increase by only a few tenths of a degree per decade, and everyone knows forecasting the weather more than a day ahead is a hit-or-miss proposition. Why then should we take seriously weather predictions years into the future? Nonetheless, the warnings sounded by those who believe that global warming is upon us outmatch even the grimmest rhetoric of the cold war.

Congressman Henry Waxman thinks global warming "may be the greatest single threat to life on this planet." Vice President Al Gore has said that greenhouse warming is an "ecological crisis without precedent in historic times," and that any dispute of this judgment is not "worthy of recognition." While not going quite so far, the former head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), William Reilly, has called this the most serious environmental problem facing our nation.

Energized by greenhouse anxiety, and by the determined advocacy of Vice President Gore, the entire environmental agenda has become a central part of President Bill Clinton's long-term legislative program. Early on, the administration signaled its eagerness to work with the green lobbyists by coordinating its energy-tax plan with the Sierra Club, the Environmental Defense Fund, and other established environmental groups in Washington. And just before Earth Day, President Clinton, reversing Bush-administration policy, announced he would commit the U.S. to the specific goals of the climate treaty signed at the Earth Summit last June in Rio de Janeiro. "Unless we act now," Clinton said, "we face a future in which the sun may scorch us, not warm us."

Naturally, the environmental lobby was delighted with the President's performance. But the lobby has an even more serious agenda in mind. Dramatically increased automobile fuel efficiency, and indeed the eventual phasing-out of the internal-combustion engine; carbon taxes; the ultimate elimination of coal- and oil-fired energy production; binding international agreements to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions—these are just a few of the items on the menu of proposed policies. Going even further, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—the major force behind last year's Rio summit—contends that *immediate* reductions of *over 60 percent* in "greenhouse emissions from human activities" are needed just to stabilize CO_2 concentrations at today's levels. Other observers put the figure at closer to 80 percent.

The impact of such numbers is difficult to fathom. According to the Department of Energy, for the U.S. alone, even a 20-percent reduction in CO_2 emissions by the year 2000—the goal President Clinton has committed us to achieving—would require a carbon tax forcing the price of electricity to double, oil prices to triple, and the cost of coal to quintuple. Since the U.S. emits only 30 percent of the earth's greenhouse gases, stabilizing CO_2 emissions worldwide would require much more draconian measures still: it would require a fundamental restructuring of the global economy.

Is any of this necessary? Do we face a looming catastrophe? In fact the answer is No. Whatever role might be played by global warming in domestic and international politics, there is *no* solid scientific evidence to support the theory that the earth is warming because of man-made greenhouse gases.

To the contrary, the weight of science indicates that carbon emissions from power plants, cars,

JEFFREY SALMON is executive director of the George C. Marshall Institute in Washington, D.C.

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and the like have only a marginal impact on the climate. As Robert White, president of the National Academy of Engineering, put it correctly in 1989: "We are confronted with an inverted pyramid of knowledge: a huge and growing mass of proposals for political action is balanced upon a handful of real facts."

How did this happen?

II

TO UNDERSTAND the political history of global warming it is necessary to begin where the greenhouse argument itself begins, with the science.

The actual greenhouse effect is a natural phenomenon, existing for eons before humans even appeared on the scene. It comes largely from water vapor in the atmosphere which warms the earth by trapping some of the heat from the sun and keeping it in the lower atmosphere. Carbon dioxide, methane, and other gases also trap heat, but most greenhouse heating comes from water vapor. The warming effect of all these gases combined maintains average global temperatures at a comfortable 65°F. Without the greenhouse effect, the average temperature would be about 10° below zero, and the earth would resemble the planet Mars.

So today's ruckus over the greenhouse effect has very little to do with the actual greenhouse effect, which everyone agrees we cannot live without. Instead, the issue concerns the changes that human activities, particularly the burning of fossil fuels, have produced and will produce on the earth's natural climate-control system.

There are many unknowns about that system, but also some generally acknowledged facts. Scientists agree that people have added a great deal of CO_2 to the air over the last 100 years, mostly by driving cars and burning coal and oil for energy. Sometime in the middle of the next century we may double the amount of CO_2 in the atmosphere.

Alone, this substantial addition of greenhouse gases might have gone unnoticed by everyone but a handful of experts. Indeed, from the 1940's through the 1970's, while greenhouse gases were pouring into the atmosphere, global temperatures actually fell, and there was much talk in scientific circles about the possibility that we were headed into a new ice age. But this 30-year cooling period interrupted 100 years of generally warmer weather, during which the earth's temperature rose by about 1°F. The global-warming scare rests largely on the coincidence of the global increase in atmospheric CO_2 and this one-degree rise in temperature. (When it comes to global temperature averages, a little can make a great difference—in growing seasons, rainfall, and general weather patterns. But that is a different story.)

The increase in CO_2 in the atmosphere over the last 100 years, the one-degree temperature rise since 1880, the economic impact of climate change—these, too, are not matters of much debate within the scientific community. What scientists wonder about is not whether man-made greenhouse gases influence temperature, but by how much.

They have been trying to figure this out for some time. Early estimates, based on a projected doubling of CO_2 in the atmosphere, ranged from as little as 2°F to as much as 10°F. They were regarded as useful experiments, but of limited forecasting value. By the 1960's, though, advances in computer technology gave meteorologists the opportunity to build more sophisticated models using the enormously complex physics which controls weather patterns.

Today's so-called consensus view on global warming, as expressed by the IPCC, suggests that at the current rate of growth in greenhouse gases, average temperatures should already be increasing by approximately half-a-degree Fahrenheit each decade, and should reach 4°F by the middle of the next century. These estimates, which have been used to great effect by environmentalists, are based on computer simulations of future climate change, or, as they are called in the trade, General Circulation Models. In fact, *every* greenhouse forecast—every dire prediction of dangerous heat waves, droughts, flooding, radically shifting weather patterns, and the like—is the result of computers attempting to model the myriad factors that influence climate change.

As the IPCC report notes in its summary, "We have substantial confidence that models can predict at least the broad-scale features of climate change." Actually, however, the body of the report, which was written and reviewed by climate scientists, raises all kinds of doubts about the models' reliability. Climate modeling is a difficult and expensive proposition, and modelers themselves are the last to claim that their computers give them much predictive power.

And for good reason. The General Circulation Models attempt to mimic our climate system by using a mathematical simulation of the earth and its oceans and atmosphere. Unfortunately, the mechanisms of our climate are extremely complicated. Take cloud cover, one of the most obvious factors in climate change. Clouds create a problem for the greenhouse models because their influence far outweighs any possible effect of man-made emissions. It is nearly impossible to predict what kinds of clouds will form, or even whether they will serve to enhance or diminish global warming. Depending on your assumptions, you can have the model arrive at pretty much whatever answer you want.

TO GAIN an idea of how reliable models are, consider how poorly they predict climate changes we have *already* experi-

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enced. And if they are incapable of accounting for the past, how will they be able to predict the future?

Over the last 100 years, greenhouse gases in the atmosphere increased by the equivalent of a 50-percent rise in CO_2. Given this increase, the models used by the IPCC would predict a warming of about two degrees over the same 100-year period. But as we have seen, temperatures have increased by only about half that amount—meaning the models have already exaggerated the greenhouse effect by a factor of two.

Even more striking, most of the one-degree warming observed over the last century took place before 1940, while most man-made greenhouse emissions entered the atmosphere *after* 1940. How are greenhouse gases to account for a temperature rise that occurred before they existed?

It gets worse. According to IPCC estimates, the increasing amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere should have driven global temperatures up by half a degree in the 1980's alone. Yet satellite measurements of global temperatures, which are the most accurate known, show no significant warming in the 1980's. Where the IPCC's models predicted half a degree, the satellites tell us there was an increase of less than one-tenth of a degree—meaning the models exaggerated by at least a factor of five.

There are other problems with the General Circulation Models. In addition to forecasting a general warming of the earth, the computer simulations predict the specific types of warming that should occur. For example, the Northern Hemisphere should warm more than the Southern, higher latitudes more than lower, and arctic regions most of all. These distinctive characteristics make up the so-called "greenhouse signal." If these changes had actually occurred, it would be a sign that the warming observed over the last 100 years had indeed been caused by man-made carbon emissions.

But no greenhouse signal has been found. There has been no significant difference in temperature trends between the two hemispheres, or between the high and low latitudes, and no significant warming in the arctic.

III

In a recent review of the debate over global warming, Richard Lindzen, Sloan Professor of Meteorology at MIT, noted that up until the 1980's, predictions based on computer models "were considered interesting, but largely academic, exercises—even by the scientists involved." What changed in the 1980's was that climate became a political issue. One of the first indications was a 1983 EPA press release claiming that dangerous global warming would occur sometime within the decade, causing sea levels to rise and several coastal cities to go under water. Environmental groups picked up the theme and added it to their already robust list of impending ecological disasters.

Something else changed as well. It is highly unlikely that the scare talk of environmentalists would have made the headway it did among politicians and the general public without the support of leading scientists. By the late 80's, that support was forthcoming.

It was in the stifling summer of 1988 that the greenhouse effect was, as the *Washington Post* put it, "propelled from the scientific journals to the nightly news." On June 23, with the thermometer hitting 98° in Washington, D.C., James Hansen, chief of NASA's Goddard Institute, and a well-known climate expert, announced before a Senate committee that "the greenhouse effect has been detected and it is changing our climate now. . . ." Even more significantly, Hansen said he was "99-percent confident" that current temperatures represent a "real warming trend" rather than natural climate variability.

Hansen's testimony had the effect he must have intended. "We have only one planet," declared the Senate committee chairman, J. Bennett Johnston. "If we screw it up, we have no place to go. The greenhouse effect has ripened beyond theory." Senator Dale Bumpers, sounding a populist note—"What you have is all the economic interests pitted against our very survival"—thought that Hansen's testimony "ought to be a cause for headlines in every newspaper of the country." And so it was. As Stephen Schneider, a climatologist and a major advocate of policies to halt global warming, summed up the reaction to Hansen's report: "Journalists loved it. Environmentalists were ecstatic."

Hansen's testimony, spectacular as it was, constituted only one of a series of endorsements offered by members of the scientific elite to the global-warming scenario. Perhaps the most dramatic was a January 1991 statement sponsored by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) and signed by 700 members of the National Academy of Sciences and over 50 Nobel laureates. There, the UCS warned that burning fossil fuels could cause global temperatures to rise by some 9°F [*sic*] over the next 100 years. "This process," said the scientists, "could have catastrophic consequences for climate, agriculture, plant and animal species, and coastlines worldwide." Global warming, the statement concluded, was "the most serious environmental threat of the 21st century."

In the face of statements like this, it is no wonder that politicians should take it as established fact that "the greenhouse effect is here" (to quote Hansen again), or should conclude, as then-Senator Timothy Wirth did in 1990, that there were no credible scientists who questioned global warming. But that was most assuredly not the case. In response to Senator Wirth's state-

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ment, the late columnist Warren Brookes compiled and published a list of 50 peer-reviewed articles, well-known in the scientific community, which contradicted various parts of the global-warming theory. Moreover, as Richard Lindzen has noted, only a few of those who signed the UCS statement were climate specialists, and after the appeal was released, the president of the National Academy of Science warned his colleagues against speaking on subjects about which they could claim no special knowledge.

Environmentalists, of course, have hardly been deterred by this. Backed, as they assert, by the scientific establishment, they have tended to show open irritation at any attempt to question the threat they have proclaimed. Vice President Gore simply dismisses disagreement as bickering that gets in the way of what needs to be done. Others may admit there are doubts, but say we need to act anyway, as an insurance policy. "Uncertainty is no excuse for complacency," argues the UCS.

Here too, as it happens, they are mistaken. According to Michael Schlesinger of the University of Illinois, even if the worst global-warming scenarios were true—which they emphatically are not—delaying a response for five years to wait for more research would cost only one-tenth of a degree of additional warming, so negligible as to be lost in the natural fluctuations of global climate.

TO GREENHOUSE advocates, however, global warming is clearly more than just another eco-scare. It is "a powerful symbol," in Gore's words, "of the larger crisis" allegedly brought on by the whole thrust of modern industrial society. Concern for the environment, writes the Vice President, must therefore now become the "central organizing principle of world civilization." Resistance to this notion threatens "a kind of global civil war between those who refuse to consider the consequences of civilization's relentless advance and those who refuse to be silent partners in the destruction."

In this view, the scientists who have lent their authority to the idea that we are on the edge of such a "destruction," who have promoted the apocalyptic vision of an earth on fire, are men of courage. But there are other ways to interpret their behavior. Scientists willing to go public with greenhouse anxiety, however wildly exaggerated, have found themselves honored by environmentalists and touted by a panic-mongering press: as *Popular Science* noted, Stephen Schneider was "near-canonized by the media" for "sounding the tocsin" on global warming. And now that President Clinton has endorsed the specific goals of the Rio treaty, the scientists would seem to have won ratification in the highest political circles of the land.

At the same time, it would be wrong to suggest that their skewed version of reality has completely carried the day. Even some mainstream journalists have lately begun to question whether all the fuss about the greenhouse effect makes any sense, and whether the immense costs of reducing CO_2 emissions are really justified. Thus, the *New York Times*, in a recent series of hard-hitting articles on trendy environmental scares, pointed in particular to exaggerated fears of global warming. Even the thoroughly green magazine *Garbage* published a tough-minded cover story in its February/March issue that totally undercut the basic premises of dangerous global warming. In April, a two-part CBS miniseries, *The Fire Next Time*—an eco-version of the 1983 nuclear-war epic *The Day After*—was panned by a number of critics, in part for its ludicrous hyping of the greenhouse effect.

While these examples are hardly definitive proof of a greater sobriety about environmental issues in general, they do signal a potentially healthy turn. One hopes, however, that skepticism will be applied not only to the environmental lobby, but also to the scientists who have collaborated in its gross distortions. These scientists, who have promoted the idea of an earth on fire, should have their own feet held closely to the flames they have helped to ignite. In the end, one of the saddest revelations of the whole global-warming scare has been how easy it is to exploit the ambitions of some members of the scientific elite. Undoing the harm this has done to the credibility of the scientific community may be the work of generations.

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Who Is Shylock?

Robert Alter

The Merchant of Venice has inspired a certain ambivalence through much of its four-century history, and that ambivalence is sharply inscribed in the changing interpretations of the play. What is more surprising is that it has been one of Shakespeare's two most popular plays (the second being *Hamlet*), as the English literary critic John Gross shows through careful documentation in his highly instructive new study, *Shylock: A Legend and Its Legacy.** Why this should be so is something of a puzzle.

An account of the plan of John Gross's book might make it sound like one of those tedious chronological surveys of the "reception history" of a familiar literary work. In fact, Gross handles his subject with such urbane intelligence and wit, such fine alertness to the telling detail and anecdote, such a nice balance of both aesthetic and moral judgment, that his survey becomes a deeply interesting case-study of the ambiguous relations between literature and historical reality.

Shylock is divided into three roughly equal sections. The first deals with the play itself and its original contexts; the second mainly with stage productions from the 17th century to the present; and the third with the archetype of Shylock and critical, fictional, and dramaturgical interpretations of it. There is a certain Germanic thoroughness to all this—as supposed literary specialists within universities increasingly limit their reading to the same dozen or so texts of Continental theory, the crown of scholarship may well be passing to literary journalists like Gross—but it is carried out with an engaging English lightness of touch.

Thus, we learn all the pertinent facts about Shakespeare's sources; the actual condition of Jews in England (what few there were) and in Venice in the 16th century; Shakespeare's own possible involvement in lending money for interest and venture capitalism. The middle section patiently reconstructs from the available sources the principal English and American productions of the play and their critical reception, and some attention is also accorded to German and French stage interpretations. The final section casts its net wide enough to include various fictional extrapolations from Shakespeare's story; a discussion of Jews in Proust; the psychoanalyst Theodore Reik's free associations, triggered by the play, about his relationship with his daughter; and the British critic M.C. Bradbrook's dumbfounding proposition that "The concentration camps of Nazi Germany bred many heroes and martyrs but also a few Shylocks." Throughout, Gross has a gift for bringing out the absurd and the outrageous through tersely acerbic understatement, though there are a few points (as in his pillorying of Jonathan Miller's 1970 National Theater production) where his sense of moral and aesthetic seemliness leads him to vigorously explicit judgments.

IN BROAD terms, one can speak of two underlying versions of Shylock between which stage productions have oscillated over the centuries. The first, which dominated productions throughout the 18th century, conceived the Jew demanding his pound of flesh as an embodiment of "savage fierceness, a deadly spirit of revenge," in the words of Nicholas Rowe's 1709 essay on Shakespeare. That conception was memorably realized in the middle of the century in the treatment of the role by the famous Irish actor Charles Macklin. "There was such an iron-visaged look," a contemporary of Macklin's observed, "such a relentless, savage cast of manners, that the audience seemed to shrink from the character."

But in 1814, a hitherto unknown actor in his early twenties named Edmund Kean effected a revolution in the stage interpretation of Shylock by casting off the traditional red wig that had linked the Jew with the devil of the medieval mystery plays and endowing him (in Gross's words) "with a large measure of dignity and humanity." William Hazlitt, present at the performance as a reviewer, was thunderstruck with admiration. Another contemporary, Douglas Jerrold, said that Kean's sympathetic interpretation

ROBERT ALTER is Class of 1937 Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. His books include *The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age, Motives for Fiction,* and *The World of Biblical Literature.*

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of the Jew seemed to the audience "like a chapter of Genesis."

Later in the century, the actor Henry Irving picked up a cue from Hazlitt in proclaiming, "I look upon Shylock as the type of a persecuted race; almost the only gentleman in the play, and the most ill-used." Irving's forceful playing of the role became the interpretation that dominated the latter part of the Victorian age. Gross associates this philo-Semitic Shylock with the growth of liberalism in 19th-century England, accompanied by a reflex of conscience about earlier ill-treatment of the Jews and an increasing acceptance of Jews in social and political life. One might add to these plausible reasons a certain imaginative sympathy on the part of the Romantics with the outsider, the figure of the cursed or hunted man, the image of suffering humanity entrammeled in the demonic.

The more or less neat swing from antipathy to sympathy between the 18th and 19th centuries disappears in our own century amid a welter of critical and stage interpretations. At least since the 1920's, there has been no preponderant version of Shylock. Sundry variations on the old diabolic conception alternate indiscriminately with new efforts to render the long-suffering human dignity of the Jew, and there have even been occasional reversions to the oldest stage notion of Shylock as a grotesque figure of fun.

The curious thing about all this, as Gross has occasion to note at several points, is that critics and directors in our time have very often been entirely unaffected by what happened to the real Jews of Venice and Berlin and Warsaw in the terrible middle decades of the century. Shakespeare of course did not write his comedy with an eye to possible future catastrophes of European history, and the play as he framed it certainly has its own thematic and dramaturgical integrity. Gross cites a delicate case in point in the comments on the play, written in 1939, by the eminent American critic Mark Van Doren.

Shylock's voice, Van Doren observed, however differently it might sound in another universe, must, in the world of the play, be "nothing but a snarl, an animal cry sounding outrageously among the flute and recorder voices of persons whose very names, unlike his own, are flowing musical phrases." This is beautifully and precisely put (Shylock in fact expresses a petulant distaste for music; his speech-rhythms are abrupt, emphatic, and unmusical; Belmont in the play is a realm of enchanting song; and so forth). Nevertheless, Gross is troubled that Van Doren—an admirably humane critic and personally sympathetic toward Jews—could say all this in 1939 without the least gesture of regret for what the Christian habit of thinking of Jews in bestial terms had led to. Literature may be a realm apart, governed by its own subtle laws of imaginative coherence, and Gross grants the virtue of studying those laws in a spirit of detachment. But literature also issues from, and feeds back into, the realm of history and politics, and in view of this, Gross finds a moral flaw in Van Doren's exquisitely disinterested account in 1939 of Shakespeare's Jew.

If *The Merchant of Venice* is a play likely to elicit an uneasy conflict of perceptions about its moral center in critics, directors, actors, and audiences, this ambiguity has in no way diminished its perennial popularity. In 19th-century New York alone, there were more than 100 productions, or an average of at least one a year. In a smaller time frame, from 1918 to 1939, there were nine different productions of the play in Stratford-on-Avon, and ten each in the West End of London and at the Old Vic. It was a perennial favorite for English school performances; and in American high schools in the last two decades of the 19th century it was, together with *Julius Caesar*, the literary text most frequently studied.

Beyond the Anglo-American sphere, the play has also had an uncanny appeal for far-flung audiences. It was the first drama of Shakespeare's to be performed in Armenian, the first to be performed in its entirety in Chinese, and the first in Japanese (by a kabuki troupe). In Belgium, up to 1950, there were more than twice as many Flemish-language productions of *The Merchant* as of any other Shakespeare play.

The extraordinary magnetism exerted by this play on audiences and directors is hard to explain in intrinsic literary terms. If one assumes that the work bracketed with *Hamlet* at the center of the Shakespeare canon would have to be a comedy (the histories and the late romances being perhaps too hybrid in form to win all-time popularity contests), more compelling candidates readily come to mind. *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Much Ado About Nothing* are livelier and more witty by far. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a more splendidly extravagant deployment of the fairy-tale elements in which *The Merchant* is supposed to excel, just as both *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* outstrip it in the rich celebration of a world of song, play, and love's fulfillment. And for the sheer funniness of boisterous farce, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* makes *The Merchant*'s efforts at stage humor look stale and unprofitable.

There are, of course, magnificent moments in *The Merchant of Venice*: Shylock's famous speeches, Portia's courtroom address, and Lorenzo's magical evocation of the harmony of the heavens near the end of the play (the speech beginning "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!"). But in between, much of the poetry is no more than serviceable, and the comic byplay

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is often labored and unfunny—dreadful, drearily repeated puns on words like "Moor" and "more," mechanically insistent malapropisms, crude jeering like Gratiano's taunt to Shylock that he will have to hang himself at the state's expense because the court has not left him the value of a cord. Then the double plot of the creditor's pound of flesh and the fair lady's three caskets is a compounding of contrivance with contrivance. Either one must say, as many critics have done, that folk-tale fantasy makes good theater, or one has to conclude that the mixed marriage of genres here strains even the loose boundaries of comic plausibility.

The Merchant of Venice, then, has its artistic as well as its moral problems. Nevertheless, there must be something about its plot and its central figure that has a powerful hold on the imagination and that accounts for its perdurable popularity. When I refer to the play's central figure I mean Shylock, even though it is Antonio who is the merchant of the title and Bassanio who is the romantic lead, and even though the Jew is only intermittently on stage, entirely excluded by the fifth act. But Gross's history—which provides a starting point for the reflections that follow—offers ample evidence that it was Shylock who was the constant lodestar for actors and audiences: all the great male performers wanted to play him; most critical accounts are, above all, responses to this compelling figure.

The one explanation which I think can be dismissed out of hand is that the play's appeal derives from its exploitation of anti-Semitic fantasy, here tapped into by the greatest dramatic poet in the language. This will not wash because, as Gross shows, many of the most spectacular successes of the play from 1814 onward were passionately philo-Semitic productions. Nor, surely, can anti-Semitism account for the popularity of the play in cultures quite unfamiliar with Jews, or in adaptations that have effaced the Jewish identity of the villain.

With regard to the surprising exportability of *The Merchant of Venice* to exotic regions, Gross suggests that the fairy-tale elements of the story may explain its universal appeal. (I shall have more to say below about the intertwining of different generic strands in the play.) Still, if the play works its magic for some of the same reasons in kabuki as at the Old Vic, it must also in other respects have a distinctive freight of meaning for the Christian West. Among the frequent reminders Gross provides of that fact, perhaps the most sobering is his report of the spate of productions in Nazi Germany—though with some directorial squirming at the miscegenation allowed by the nonracist anti-Semitism of the plot.

The ultimate power of *The Merchant* resides in Shylock; and Shylock, as the history of the play's interpretation indicates, is an explosively unstable figure, both as comic villain and as Jew. Let me propose that there is at once a poor fit and a synergy between Shylock's dramatically archetypal role as ill-spirited obstacle in the comic plot—the old man, *senex*, of Roman comedy who tries to withhold his fair daughter as well as his wealth from her destined lover—and his ethnically archetypal role as bloodsucking Jewish moneylender. There is, I suspect, something about the transgression of boundaries in the ambiguous dynamic between those two roles that gives the play its peculiar fascination.

The catalogue of negative attributes exhibited by Shakespeare's Jew is, alas, what could be expected almost anywhere in Christendom from the First Crusade to the Enlightenment. Shylock is, from his first appearance, the sullenly obdurate outsider ("I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you"). So far, so good, at least in regard to the historical record: resentment against the Jew as stubborn alien belongs to what the historian Gavin Langmuir has called "anti-Judaic" feeling, in contradistinction to anti-Semitic animus which instead of reacting to the real condition of Jews projects lurid fantasies on to them.

Such fantasies, however, soon abound in the play. The Jew is demonic—"the very devil incarnation," his servant Launcelot Gobbo announces, with considerable corroboration from the plot; his house is represented as a kind of hell, the antipodes of the aristocratic *paradiso* of Portia's Belmont. He is also repeatedly referred to in bestial terms, as a cur or wolf (Van Doren's "snarl" is quite to the point). In the algebra of archetypes, the combination of beast of prey and devil yields vampire, an identity Shylock is prepared to claim for himself in his first speech to Jessica—"I'll go in hate, to feed upon/ The prodigal Christian."

Usury itself, the play suggests (in historical bad faith, for it was widespread among Christians by the late 16th century), is a kind of vampirism, and Shylock's implacable demand for his pound of flesh is a horrific literal translation of that metaphor. In turn, Gross plausibly suggests that Shylock's murderous bond is a proposal "to commit ritual murder at one remove." Portia's courtroom denial to Shylock of any drop of blood thus goes to the very core of the anti-Semitic nightmare image. The fantasy of the Jew battening on Christian blood is interfused in the tale of the pound of flesh with the hostile stereotype of the Jew as usurer—as it would continue to be in a wide variety of texts, from Marx's notorious essay on the Jews to Nazi and Communist propaganda.

Beyond this cluster of repellent traits that are drawn from age-old anti-Semitic imaginings, Shylock exhibits one salient characteristic more

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closely associated with comic villains than with Jews: he is a dour hater of the revels that are at the heart of the comic world. He is mistrustful of the masked carnival figures surging through the Venetian streets; he despises music ("the vile squealing of the wry neck'd fife") and is suspicious of metaphor, with an odd little tic of literally "translating" the ones he uses himself; and he sternly disapproves of all forms of risk-taking, whether in business or in games of chance. Finally, and perhaps most crucially, he is a man with a rigidly fixed identity who abhors disguises and exchanged identities. Hence his hostility to the Venetian masks, and hence the poetic justice of his being foiled in justice by a woman got up as a man. The ultimate pain of his forced conversion at the end of Act IV may be the violation not of his creed but rather of his hard-set sense of self. Shylock is the man who insists on being one thing alone in a comic world that celebrates multifariousness and a playful conjuring with appearances.

Now, to all this it is essential to add the dimension of Shylock that has been so abundantly noted by critics since Hazlitt and by actors since Kean—that Shakespeare, with his unrivaled gift for endowing his characters with life, bestowed more touching humanity on Shylock than the prejudices of his culture might have allowed. The most frequently cited prooftext is of course the great "Hath not a Jew eyes" speech, and though that ends in justifying vengeance, Shylock also observes that he has learned the code of vengeance from the Christians—by no means a historically implausible claim in the 16th century.

A more succinct, almost startling, instance in which Shylock's humanity suddenly shines through is when he is told that Jessica, after eloping with much of the family treasure, has traded a particular turquoise ring for a monkey: "It was my turquoise," he cries out in distinctly uncomic anguish. "I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys." This is no villain who speaks here but a man who truly loved, and was loved by, a wife he still mourns in his long condition as widower, who left him this only daughter, now become his heartless betrayer.

We will remember the ring given Shylock as a pledge of love later on, when Portia and her companion Nerissa give rings to their betrothed lovers, making them solemnly vow that nothing will lead them to part with the rings; the two women then cunningly extract these very tokens of love when they appear in men's disguise in the trial scene. At the very end, with amorous rebukes and teasing sexual puns, the women restore the rings to their bridegrooms and forgive their trespass—but in comparison with Shylock's naked pain over the loss of his dead wife's token of love, there remains a lingering sense of gratuitous monkey business in Belmont. This is a detail in no way required by the comic plot or the larger thematic design, but which Shakespeare's humane genius drew him into imagining.

The character of Shylock, then, bursts through the conventional limits of the comic *senex* in two opposite directions—in the representation of the suffering of a much-wronged outsider (the "tragic" Shylock, as some critics would have it) and in the demonization of what in other comedies would be the figure of fun (the mythic Shylock). It is hard to think of another comedy that pushes so powerfully against the boundaries of genre in these two opposite ways. Before the fact, one might imagine that such a contradictory conception of character could not work; but in the incandescence of Shakespeare's imagination, the alternating tragic and mythic Shylock comes vividly to life, and perhaps the contradiction at the core of the character explains the power of this strange figure.

But I have been speaking of the play as though the genres and archetypes of literature evolved in a vacuum, without any relation to history. My account so far may say something about the fascination with *The Merchant* experienced by audiences in Tokyo and Beijing, but for theatergoers in mid-18th-century London or in New York after the Civil War, not to mention Berlin of the 1930's, there were obviously other potent considerations involved. Jews, too, would come to be fascinated with *The Merchant of Venice*—John Gross offers some piquant anecdotes, for example, about Yiddish productions—but the history of the reception of the play is above all a history of responses by a culturally and often creedally Christian audience.

In this regard, I would argue that there is a deep if somewhat murky correlation between the transgression of the limits of comedy in the play and its intermittent transgression of the boundaries between self and reviled other, insider and outsider. Those contradictory excesses in the characterization of Shylock remind us that comedy's world, where all tigers turn paper, and all obstacles to sweet fulfillment are in the end gracefully overleaped, is only make-believe. In the real world that comedy displaces, there are nightmarish terrors that cannot be dispelled, and pleasure is all too often bought at the price of someone else's pain. Shakespeare in this fashion plays a kind of dangerous game with the genre in which he is working while he nevertheless affirms its logic, rounding out the play with the moonlit postlude of the fifth act in which the figure of Shylock has been entirely exorcised and love sounds its bantering lute song on the threshold of consummation.

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Something roughly equivalent occurs in the play's treatment of the cultural conventions of anti-Semitism. It was clearly not part of Shakespeare's conscious design to question the received wisdom of Christian hostility toward the Jews. Living in a country from which they had been banished for four centuries, he had little or no opportunity for firsthand acquaintance with them, and so what he "knew" about Jews was what his culture knew—that they were rapacious, greedy, cunning, and inhumanly cruel. All this is Shylock. There is nothing new about the hostile stereotypes, but, as Gross soberly observes, Shylock the Jewish villain, imbued with the force of Shakespeare's intrinsic poetic power and subsequent prestige, "helped to spread [the stereotypes] and to keep them vigorously alive. He belongs, inescapably, to the history of anti-Semitism."

If this bleak truth were the whole truth, one might sympathize with the protesters who have emerged from some modern Jewish communities in response to productions of *The Merchant of Venice*. But Gross is quick to remind us of Shakespeare's inclination, as a playwright who disliked one-sided conflicts, to "build up" Shylock. He could not resist trying to imagine what it might be like to be a Jew, and "dramatic imagination, when it is pitched at the Shakespearean level, becomes a moral quality, a form of humanism." The disparity between the antipathetic and the empathetic representation of Shylock leaves, in Gross's view, a lingering hint of nastiness in the play. Portia, Antonio, Bassanio, Lorenzo embody the comic virtues of grace, playfulness, intelligence, and loving friendship, but they are also utterly cold, callous, and exasperatingly blithe in seeing the Jew as no more than a vile cur to be driven off with cudgels. It is hardly a prejudice that can have a claim to historical innocence.

Yet it could well be that this peculiar dissonance between the anti-Semitic conception of Shylock and the moments of incipient or genuine empathy is precisely what has excited the imagination of audiences over the centuries. One must remember that it was the Jew who was constantly the archetypal alien in the mind of Christian Europe. There were, to be sure, other candidates: the Muslims, who were actual imperial adversaries; the Orientals, of inscrutable repute; and still more exotic, purportedly savage, types, like black Africans and American Indians. But all these stood on the other side of a distant cultural horizon.

The Jew alone was in the midst of Christendom, speaking Christian languages, conducting trade with Christians, often looking and acting far more "Christian" than the stereotypes of prejudice were willing to admit. And it was thus the Jew, stubborn in his particularism, despised by Christians, who raised disturbing questions about the boundaries of Christian collective identity. Hence a certain persistent edginess about the Jewish other, which could generate anything from a simple perception of difference, or similarity in difference, to genteel discrimination, active persecution, forced conversion, even mass murder.

WHAT happens in *The Merchant of Venice* is that the accepted definition of self by way of contradistinction to the excluded other is buoyantly sustained, as one might expect in a comedy, while the two-sided representation of Shylock flashes an intermittent, stroboscopic light on a radically antithetical possibility of identity. Perhaps there might be hidden affinities between self and other; perhaps the very otherness of the other is largely a cultural construct.

The intimations of such a possibility in Shakespeare's treatment of Shylock are quite unsentimental. If there are moments when he provides insight into Shylock's very human anguish as an outsider, this invitation to identify with the Jewish villain may also suggest that the predatory aspects of the character, his unbending cruelty, are not to be so patly identified as the exclusive property of the hated alien, but may comfortably nest as well in the Christian heart. If in Shylock the diabolic is made human, perhaps what the culture assumes definitionally to be human may have its own dark part in the diabolic. It is not mere coincidence that the first sympathetic portrayals of Shylock in criticism and on the stage came at the very moment that the blighted Byronic hero was dominating the English literary imagination.

The plot of the comedy, of course, keeps Christian community and Jewish outsider perfectly distinct. In Belmont, far above the mire of Venetian trade with its shady Jewish practitioners, the circle of melodiously named heroes and heroines is happily drawn tight. No Jewish foot is allowed to profane these precincts, except for that of the lovely Jessica, cleansed by baptismal waters. But down in the savage give-and-take of the commercial world of Venice, the barriers between insider and outsider are not always impermeable, and there are fleeting hints that the savagery exists on both sides.

Thus, in Act III, Scene III, Shylock visits Antonio in jail to warn him that on the morrow he will have his pound of flesh. Antonio, ever the perfect gentleman, addresses his Jewish adversary courteously as "good Shylock," hoping he will persuade the moneylender to show compassion. The Jew, in an ecstasy of triumphant vengefulness, scarcely lets him get a word in edgewise, repeatedly insisting, "I will have my bond." Antonio quickly abandons the attempt to address Shylock, and with a kind of shrug, explains to

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his friend Solanio that the Jew hates him because he, Antonio, has given loans without interest.

In all these respects, the scene is entirely an anti-Semitic set-up: Christian nobility, reasonableness, and charity over against "Old Testament" vengeance; pre-capitalist Christian lending as a kind of philanthropy over against Jewish usury. But even when he is playing with loaded dice, Shakespeare cannot refrain from giving Shylock one quick fair throw. "Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause,/ But since I am a dog, beware my fangs." It is a very small gesture in a scene designed to expose Shylock's inhumanity, but it is nonetheless astonishing. For the fact of the matter is that every Christian in the play, given half a chance, is happy to call Shylock dog, and would clearly do so even without the excuse of his insistence on his terrible bond.

The plot revolving around the pound of flesh preserves the simple and pernicious cultural opposition between bestial Jew and human Christian, or, in theological terms, between the old dispensation of implacable law and the new dispensation governed by the quality of mercy which is not strained. Mercy, however, as exercised by the Christian characters, is conspicuous for *not* dropping as the gentle rain from heaven on any Jewish head. Shylock, treated like a beast of prey as a matter of Christian cultural practice, defiantly tells Antonio that this, then, is what he will become.

The Merchant of Venice, not through Shakespeare's intention but through his uncanny dramatic intuition, invites Christian audiences to a kind of out-of-self experience. If the looming, sinister other embodies all the hateful qualities that Christian culture would like to think are alien to it, there are also brief but powerful intimations that the other may be the moral and psychological consequence of treatment by the self; that the self may harbor the fearsome attributes it habitually projects on the other; and that both participate profoundly in a vulnerable human condition which the self is usually predisposed to see as its own private property.

Actual productions of *The Merchant of Venice* have generally opted either for the humane, suffering Shylock or for the diabolic one. But it seems plausible that the magnetism of the work is generated by the interplay between the two perspectives, with all the freight of historical and psychological ambiguities that I have tried to describe. This is by no means Shakespeare's most satisfying play, but the ultimate source of its strange appeal, so finely traced by John Gross, may perhaps be found in the very tensions and disjunctions of its underlying conception.

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The Flowers on Sartre's Grave

Hilton Kramer

In one of the reports that Jane Kramer used to send to the *New Yorker* from Paris in the 1980's, there is a brief account of the way the grave of Jean-Paul Sartre in the Montparnasse cemetery had become an object of piety for a new generation of French students:

> Thousands of students marched in his funeral cortège through Montparnasse, and got to know the place, and a lot of them come back now to visit. They come when the weather is good, to read and walk around with a *pain au chocolat* and enter into a kind of custodial communion with their hero. There is always a flower on Sartre's grave; Simone de Beauvoir left a rose on the day of the funeral, and afterward the students took over.

Because Miss Kramer no doubt shared this reverence for the man who had presided for so long as the leader of French intellectual life, there was no speculation in her piece, which was written in 1985, as to exactly what the students might have wished to commune with their "hero" about. Was their communion an expression of solidarity with his beliefs, or was it only an act of *hommage* to the kind of intellectual imperium over which Sartre and his circle had once ruled with an iron hand? It would be interesting to know what was in the minds of those students as they made their pilgrimage to lay flowers on Sartre's grave, for elsewhere in Europe history had already inflicted some devastating blows upon the immense edifice of ideological falsehood which Sartre and his contemporaries on the French intellectual Left had devoted decades to creating, and even in Paris their political legacy was in ruins.

In the heyday of Sartre's dominion over French intellectual life, it clearly lay beyond the power of American criticism to modify the malevolent influence of that dominion in even the smallest degree. America, after all, was the principal target of Sartre's wrath. Being the sole military power capable of resisting the victory of Soviet socialism, which in Sartre's mind was never clearly differentiated from the triumph of Stalinism, the United States was demonized as the enemy of mankind. That it was also the stronghold of capitalism and a bastion of bourgeois democracy only added to the crimes for which it was held accountable. It hardly mattered that in the real world, the monumental crimes of the era were committed by Stalin and then Mao against their own populations and those that fell under their control. Through the special alchemy of the Sartrean dialectic, crimes committed in the name of socialism were forgiven as contingent derelictions when they were not simply denied, and all attempts to hold their perpetrators to moral account were dismissed as an example of the "bad faith" to be expected from the bourgeois enemy.

There was a time, in the early 1950's, when this travesty of political morality met with some spirited resistance from American intellectuals, but for the most part that resistance proved to be ineffectual. In 1952, in his contribution to the symposium on "Our Country and Our Culture" in *Partisan Review,* Lionel Trilling wrote:

> The political situation, the commanding position of Stalinism in French cultural life, does not prevent our having the old affinity with certain elements of that life, but it makes the artistic and intellectual leadership of France unthinkable.

Yet even Trilling, when he came to reprint his essay in *A Gathering of Fugitives* in 1956, deleted this important passage. Others, like Sidney Hook, remained more stalwart in their criticism of Sartre and his cohorts, but however much their efforts were to be welcomed, they were without influence in Paris, where the Sartrean politics of fantasy and denial reigned supreme. So supreme, indeed, that even Charles de Gaulle at the height of his power refused to call Sartre to account when he was clearly in violation of the law. "You do not imprison Voltaire," the President of France famously observed—but then, of course, de Gaulle had an anti-American agenda of his own.

When American intellectual life was itself overtaken by a radical movement in the 1960's, this demonization of the United States in particular and of bourgeois democracy in general was swiftly

Hilton Kramer is the editor of the *New Criterion* and the author of *The Age of the Avant-Garde* and *The Revenge of the Philistines.*

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established here, too, as the hallmark of political wisdom, and there was no more talk about the intellectual leadership of France being "unthinkable." In fact, a new wave of French radical influence was already taking possession of American intellectual life, and the Sartrean brand of anti-Americanism, now greatly augmented by home-made simulacra cut from the same ideological materials, became the dominant outlook of our own intellectual class.

It has remained so, moreover, down to the present day, and is now deeply embedded in public policy and pedagogy. Pronouncements that even in the 1960's could still stir a minor scandal—Susan Sontag's assertion in 1966, for example, that "The white race *is* the cancer of history"—have now been integrated into the school curriculum, and a racist fanatic like Frantz Fanon, whose influence is another of Sartre's lethal contributions to our political culture, is mandatory reading at our most prestigious universities. There is thus now a sense in which *our* students, too, have been pressed into the service of laying flowers on Sartre's grave. Only here it is a classroom exercise, not a sentimental ramble through the Montparnasse cemetery.

It will forever remain one of the ironic lessons of history that the moral force which finally shattered the influence of Sartre and the French Left on their own home ground came not from any effective dissent in the intellectual capitals of the West but from a heroic survivor of the very system whose evils they had long denied. It was the publication of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* in the early 1970's that finally reduced this whole tradition of political falsehood to ideological rubble. Fifteen years ago, Robert Conquest described the "immense shock" that Solzhenitsyn's epic work administered to the French intellectual elite:

> We have seen, for the first time, the crumbling of the old delusions of the intellectuals. The incredible deceptions and self-deceptions by which Sartre and all the others indoctrinated the intelligentsia had been impervious to the presentation of facts, and to the advancing of logical arguments by a handful of distinguished analysts like Raymond Aron or polemical attacks on their whole way of thinking by independent men like Jean-François Revel. It remained true that a climate of conformity pervaded the intellectual classes, that every *bien-pensant* professor, student, journalist, writer held, in a way too automatic to be called a belief, that even if the USSR or similar systems had their faults, they were nonetheless imbued with a central virtue which made them superior to the wicked West.

Publication of *The Gulag Archipelago* was the turning point that finally made it possible for the truth about the French Left's mythification of the Soviet system to be openly discussed as a historical scandal of huge proportions. "The sudden disintegration of this new Age of Faith, the swift dissipation of the tenacious miasmas which had hung over the French mind," Conquest wrote, "have been truly astonishing."

No less astonishing was what may be called Sartre's existential response to this long-deferred moment of truth, for with a symbolism almost too perfect to be believed, the momentous shift in the *Zeitgeist* found Sartre himself afflicted with physical blindness, the perfect correlative of the purblind political vision that had long characterized his analysis of every public issue. When he suffered the loss of his eyesight in 1973, the year of *The Gulag Archipelago*'s original publication, Sartre announced that "My occupation as a writer is completely destroyed." But, as was often the case with this writer, the statement turned out to have a larger meaning that the man himself was hardly capable of comprehending.

Now, a generation after Robert Conquest wrote about the effect of *The Gulag Archipelago* upon the "climate of conformity [that] pervaded the intellectual classes" in France in the days of Sartre's ascendancy, comes a detailed analysis of the first dozen years of this shameful post-World War II history. Solzhenitsyn's book is barely mentioned in Tony Judt's *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals 1944-1956*,* for the appearance of *The Gulag Archipelago* postdates the period under examination, yet the consequences of its publication in France in the 1970's obviously prepared the way for this new study.

One of the central perspectives that Judt (who teaches at New York University) brings to his examination of the ideological gyrations of the French Left in the early days of the cold war is that of political developments in the Soviet Union and Eastern and Central Europe. "[I]t was precisely in this decade," he writes,

> that Soviet society expanded from its earlier containment within the frontiers of a distant and alien Russia and established itself in the territory formerly known as Central Europe. . . . The postwar establishment of totalitarian government in Budapest, Warsaw, Berlin, and Prague, with its attendant repression, persecution, and social upheaval, placed the moral dilemma of Marxist practice at the center of the Western intellectual agenda.

The story of how the French intellectual Left responded to this expansion of Stalinism, and specifically to the Stalinist show trials of 1947-53, occupies the moral center of Judt's book.

Thus, while *Past Imperfect* is first of all what Judt calls "an essay on intellectual responsibility, [and] a study of the moral condition of the intel-

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ligentsia in postwar France," it is several other things as well. It is an important contribution to the intellectual history of the cold war as that war was conducted in the cultural capital of Western Europe. It is also, in part, an analysis of French anti-Americanism and the role it played in the Left's falsification of Soviet tyranny. And finally, it offers us an illuminating theory of French political thought that traces the origin of this tendency to falsify the facts of history to what Judt describes as "France's own revolutionary heritage and its ambivalent ethical message."

In particular Judt is interested "in an aspect of the modern philosophical tradition in France that has until very recently aroused little comment in France itself, the marked absence of a concern with public ethics or political morality." With this book we have certainly come a long way from, say, a work like David Caute's *Communism and the French Intellectuals* (1964), in which Sartre is described as "without doubt the most perceptive and morally responsible of the French philosopher-writers to have wrestled with the problem of Communism."

SARTRE is not the only prominent figure in post-World War II French intellectual life to come under scathing scrutiny in Judt's study. Much attention is also lavished upon Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and sundry camp-followers of Sartre's magazine *Les Temps modernes* as well as Emmanuel Mounier and his radical circle at the journal *Esprit*. It is, in fact, Sartre, Mounier, and their satellites who are at the center of this critical survey, for it was they who "controlled the cultural terrain, they [who] set the terms of public discourse, they [who] shaped the prejudices and language of their audience." As Judt says: "Their way of being intellectuals echoed and reinforced the self-image of the intellectual community at large, even those of its members who disagreed with them."

Foremost among the "prejudices" of this intellectual community was its devotion to the idea of revolution and its corollary rejection of liberalism and parliamentary democracy. This prejudice had a history that predated the war and the Occupation. It had already made itself felt in the squalid political battles of the 30's that prepared the way for the complaisant ethos of the Occupation. On the Left, as Judt writes of the 30's, "fascism might be the immediate threat, but liberalism was the true enemy"; and on the Right, represented by Charles Maurras and *Action française*, "an aggressive distaste for the compromises of democratic politics" was also "commonplace."

Judt is particularly good at tracing the intellectual genealogy of this prewar "intersection at the extremes of radical sentiment from Left to Right." "Like the Communist party of the postwar years," he writes, "Maurras and his movement constituted a sort of revolving door through which passed a surprising number of writers afterward associated with quite different political positions." (In other words, radical positions on the Left.) He cites the example of Jean-Marie Domenach, later the successor to Emmanuel Mounier as editor of *Esprit*, who in 1953 expressed his faith in the Communists' "sincere love of justice," but who in the 30's had been, by his own admission, a "childish" follower of French fascism. What remained consistent in this shift from the radical Right to the radical Left was a hatred of bourgeois democracy.

For all but the most die-hard acolytes of French fascism, however, the Nazi conquest of France in 1940 and the establishment of the Vichy regime effectively eradicated the appeal of the extreme Right. Yet, contrary to popular belief, the Resistance did not prompt any wholesale alignment with the extreme Left. Memories of the Hitler-Stalin pact, though soon to evaporate, were still fresh. As Judt observes, "The political ideas and programs of the Resistance itself were not notably revolutionary." True, there was "the sense of being part of something larger than oneself—a circle of dissenting writers, a resistance group, a clandestine political organization, or History itself." But in the beginning, at least, History was not yet wholly identified with the idea of revolution. That would come with the Liberation and a return to party politics. "If there was a general sentiment" in the Resistance, he writes, "it was probably something along the lines of Camus's desire for 'the simultaneous instauration of a collective economy and a liberal polity.' "

Yet after the war, when faced with the political choices of the Liberation, "intellectuals directed criticism at the parliamentarians for betraying the ideals of a united national renaissance." It was in this situation of recoil from the politics of bourgeois democracy that "the Communists . . . mattered the most for the intellectual community." As Judt puts it:

> This is not because the Communist party could count on a significant membership among the *haute intelligentsia*—quite the contrary: the impermeable, deathless commitment of an Aragon . . . was only ever a minority taste. But for many younger intellectuals, not only had the party redeemed itself in action since 1941, but it represented in France, both symbolically and in the flesh, the transcendent power and glory of Stalin's Soviet Union, victorious in its titanic struggle with Nazi Germany, the unchallenged land power on the European continent and heir apparent to a prostrate Europe.

"It helped," Judt adds in a telling insight, "that Communism asked of its sympathizers not that

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they think for themselves, merely that they accept the authority of others." Moreover, what was "most important" about Communism's appeal for the intellectuals was that it was "about revolution"—not revolution here and now, to be sure, and certainly not in a way that would vitiate either their freedom or their status, but in some distant "future [that] could always justify passivity in the present."

WHAT the idea of revolution signified for these intellectuals remained remarkably abstract, however. The keen identification with History engendered by the Occupation and the Resistance never entailed a close examination of actual historical events—especially the kind of historical events that might cast some light on the way revolution really worked. What the idea of revolution seemed to mean, first of all, was "the natural and necessary outcome . . . of the hopes and allegiances of the wartime years." In this respect, the idea of revolution seemed to embody a kind of historical inevitability beyond the reach of individual volition.

Then, too, notes Judt, "revolution meant order"—an alternative to "the unregulated mediocrity of the Third Republic" that derived "its political coordinates from the lessons of history and its moral imperatives from the recent experience of political struggle and engagement." The irony—or was it only the hypocrisy?—of the situation was that for most of these intellectuals, there had been no real "political struggle and engagement" during the war:

> Only a few of the men and women who are the subject of this book were ever exposed to real risks during this period; indeed, those who went to the most trouble to theorize this situation tended to be the ones whose position was least exposed and whose careers were least affected.

But what was finally most important for the intellectuals was a belief in revolution as a "categorical imperative." This was "Sartre's special contribution." For Sartre, Judt explains, revolution

> was not a matter of social analysis or political preference, nor was the moment of revolution something one could select on the basis of experience or information. It was an a-priori existential requirement. . . . In short, action (of a revolutionary nature) is what sustains the authenticity of the individual.

With the idea of revolution thus transformed into an "a-priori existential requirement" and its goal firmly tethered to the "authenticity of the individual," politics in the ordinary sense of the term tended to disappear in favor of a fantasy world in which actions and events were judged according to some purely subjective standard of ideological gratification. In Judt's words:

> The abstract and protean quality of revolution thus described meant not only that almost any circumstance could be judged propitious to it and any action favorable to its ends; it also meant that anything that qualified under the heading "revolutionary" was necessarily to be supported and defended.

In this realm of looking-glass politics, revolution was, in effect, whatever you wanted it to be, and it neither entailed sacrifice nor brought any malign consequences in its wake. The threat of real revolution was always elsewhere. "Thus it cost little to be for the revolution," Judt writes, "and was hardly worth the effort to be against it, in this abstract form."

STILL, despite the best efforts of Sartre, Mounier, and other fantasists of the Left to reduce the politics of revolution to the rhetoric of existential posturing, historical reality persisted in producing actual events that required an immediate and unequivocal response to brute assertions of totalitarian power. It was in the face of such events that what Judt calls "the moral price that was exacted" by this commitment to revolution was made most explicit.

One of the first tests came with the Prague coup in February 1948, which Judt describes as "the last Communist takeover in Central Europe, [which] made little pretense of representing the desires of the majority or of responding to some real or imaginary national crisis." Even for readers inured to the obscene apologetics with which the radical Left in France championed Soviet tyranny in this period, it is still shocking to be reminded of what Mounier, for example, wrote in defending the Communist coup in Prague:

> In Czechoslovakia the coup masks a retreat of capitalism, the increase of workers' control, the beginnings of a division of landed property. There is nothing astonishing in the fact that it was not undertaken with all the ceremonial of a diplomatic move, nor that it is the work of a minority. None of this is unique to Communism: there is no regime in the world today or in history that did not begin with force, no progress that was not initiated by an audacious minority in the face of the instinctive laziness of the vast majority.

"As to the victims of the Prague coup, the Czech socialists and their social-democratic allies," Judt observes, "Mounier had no regrets. The social democrats in particular he described as 'saboteurs of the European Liberations.' Their cause is lost, their fate richly deserved—'they belong to a dead Europe.'" And this was a sentiment widely shared on the Left. Judt cites "the disdain felt by Simone de Beauvoir, for example, at all mention of 'reformism,' her desire to see social change

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brought about in a single convulsive moment or else not at all."

The sum of Soviet horrors that had somehow to be explained—and explained away—by the French intellectual Left in these years was truly formidable, yet in every case, no matter what the extremes of violence and terror, what Judt characterizes as the "moral anesthesia" of the Left proved equal to the sordid task. In 1949 came the appeal of David Rousset in *Le Figaro littéraire* for an inquiry into the Soviet labor camps. "Rousset was a left-wing activist, a survivor of the German camps, a friend of Sartre, and a Frenchman," Judt points out, but what finally counted against him for Sartre was that his position on the Soviet concentration-camp system placed him on the wrong side of the Communist issue: "*Les Temps modernes* broke with Rousset at the end of 1949, over what it saw as his anti-Communism, or more precisely his willingness to work with anti-Communists in pursuit of his revelations about the USSR." This was, in effect, a dress rehearsal for Sartre's more famous break with Camus, in 1952, over essentially the same issue.

BEGINNING in 1949, too, came the purges and show trials in the Soviet-controlled states of Central and Eastern Europe that culminated in what Judt calls "a final, sanguinary convulsion" when "the Czech Communist leadership and its Soviet advisers staged the trial of Rudolf Slánsky and thirteen others in November 1952." Slánsky had until recently been the secretary-general of the Communist party in Prague, and, like others among the accused, he was a Jew. The trial that was staged for Slánsky and his colleagues, with what Judt describes as its "unambiguously anti-Semitic character," thus added still another dimension to the horror that the French intellectual Left was obliged to assimilate into its defense of the Soviet Union.

And then, in 1956, came the Hungarian uprising and the Soviet invasion. "It might be thought," says Judt, "that the Soviet invasion of Hungary constituted sufficient evidence of history's verdict upon the Communist illusion," but of course with Sartre and his circle mere "evidence" was never any match for dialectical prowess. For Sartre,

> Soviet actions had no bearing on the legitimacy of the Communist project. . . . On the contrary, Sartre insisted, [the Soviet Union] is privileged by its goal (liberty and justice for all) and by the fact that it differs from all other systems and regimes in this respect.

As for the West, tainted as it was by capitalism and bourgeois democracy, it had, according to Sartre, "nothing to offer in place of Communism." "It seems, then," writes Judt, "that for Sartre there was no conceivable circumstance under which we would abandon our faith in the Communist future, given our need to believe in *something*."

From such statements about "faith" and "belief" in Communism, Judt draws the obvious conclusion:

> In order to appreciate the belief system of postwar intellectuals, we need to grasp that what is at issue here is not *understanding*, the cognitive activity usually associated with intellectuals, but faith. To react as people did to the impact of Communism in the years following 1945, they had first to accept unquestioningly a certain number of the fundamental tenets of what amounted to a civic religion.

He then offers us a summary of "the fundamental tenets" of this "civic religion":

> [A]t the center lay the will and the desire to believe in Communism. Around this article of faith were wrapped various layers of argument deriving from specific Communist achievements in the recent past. In the next orbit was to be found a certain style of reasoning, a sort of epistemological double vision, which made it possible to explain Soviet behavior in terms not invoked for any other system or persons; this discourse, although especially applicable to the Communist case, did not derive from it and had older historical and philosophical origins and objectives. The same is true of the next layer, a longstanding habit of mind, hostile to various manifestations of modernity and individualism, which is sometimes referred to, in misleading shorthand, as "anti-Americanism." At a further remove, but still within the galaxy of established cultural practices, there was the peculiar combination of preeminence and self-hatred that has marked the intellectual as a public figure in modern France and contributed to ambivalence in the face of a proletarian politics. Finally, and providing all the above with their political and ideological anchor, there was the indigenous anti-liberalism of the French republican intelligentsia.

One notable feature of this "civic religion" was its indifference to the increasingly blatant anti-Semitic features of Soviet power in the 50's. In this matter, the French themselves had a good deal of blood on their hands. They had, after all, collaborated with the Nazis in rounding up French Jews for the extermination camps. But this, for the moment, could be—and was—attributed to the "reaction and fascism" that had overtaken France with the Nazi conquest. After the war, it was believed—in yet another act of faith—that, as Judt writes, "Nations that had undergone . . . a revolution—the Soviet Union and now the countries of Eastern Europe—were by definition freed forever from the scourge of racial hatred and persecution." In other words, "With Stalin's defeat of Hitler, anti-Semitism had ceased to be an issue." As a consequence, Judt observes, "the

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intellectual community in France was ill-prepared for the onslaught of anti-Semitic prejudice that surfaced in the international Communist movement at the beginning of the 1950's."

On this issue, too, Sartre remained consistent in his refusal to criticize the Communists even when openly challenged to deal with the Jewish question by no less an eminence than François Mauriac:

> [M]aking direct reference to [Sartre's] *Réflexions sur la question Juive*, [Mauriac] demanded of Sartre a statement on the condition of the Jews in the Soviet bloc, the persecution of Jewish Communists, the deportation and murder of Yiddish writers, and the growing rumors of an impending pogrom in Moscow itself.

But Sartre, Judt goes on, had other priorities:

> . . . this demand for a moral commitment, for a significant intervention by Sartre, came just at the time of his enthusiastic adoption of the Communist cause and the publication of his strongest statement in defense of the open-ended legitimacy of Communist practice; the first part of "*Les Communistes et la paix*" was published in *Temps modernes* in July 1952, the second in November 1952. Not only did Sartre not comment on the Slánsky trial, he attended the Communists' "World Congress of Peace" in Vienna in the days immediately following the mass execution of eleven of those convicted. His only reply to Mauriac was to issue the following characteristic warning: "The problem of the condition of Jews in the Peoples' Democracies must not become a pretext for propaganda or polemic."

Once again, it was far more important for Sartre to remain anti-anti-Communist than to address the truth. "An anti-Communist is a dog, I don't change my views on this, I never shall," he later declared; and he never did.

THERE are many more such episodes described in *Past Imperfect*, and many more statements of a similar kind quoted, analyzed, and annotated. This is a book dense with detail and documentation, and it goes further than anything else I have read in answering the question as to why, as Judt puts it in his introduction, "in the circumstances of modern French political culture, anti-Communism appeared to be excluded from the lexicon of nonconservative beliefs."

For anyone with a taste for macabre intellectual comedy, moreover, Judt turns up some very choice items. There is the case of Claude Roy, who, after his disillusionment with the Soviet Union, turned his attention to the achievements of Mao's China, out of a desire, he said, to escape the "stench" of Stalinism! Roy is also cited as one (there have been others) who, in Judt's words, "was politically engaged on the Left in the post-war years [but] claims now to have retained an inner identity not wholly aligned with the public one presented to the world and to friends on the Left." And how does Roy explain this moral discrepancy? Well, by the usual leap into high-flown abstraction: "I voted for Jean-Jacques Rousseau and for Marx in the elections of History. But in the secret ballot of the individual, I opted rather for Schopenhauer and Godot."

About this whole phenomenon of fatuous self-exculpation, Judt offers some mordant observations:

> The apparently insouciant ease with which the French intellectual Left thus put the Communist moment behind it was bought at the cost of its credibility and prestige in the rest of Europe. . . . More than their past errors or the occasional air of overbearing superiority, it was the ineffable solipsism of so many French intellectuals that finally broke their hold on the European imagination. Uniquely, they seemed unable to grasp the course of events. Despite their best intentions, Sartre, Mounier, Merleau-Ponty, and their spiritual heirs did not see themselves projected onto the stage of history but rather saw history reduced to the categories and dimensions of their own intellectual trajectories.

As a result, Judt continues, "What was lost was the special meaning of the term *French intellectual* in continental Europe itself."

The sheer scale of the mendacity and bad faith of this "civic religion," by means of which French intellectuals turned Communism into a sacred cause, is still breathtaking and dispiriting to contemplate even when all the explanations are firmly in place. And it is all the more appalling when one comes to realize how much was owed to the example of Sartre and his French contemporaries by our own intellectuals when, beginning in the 1960's, they engaged in a similar project to deify totalitarian regimes—only now in Havana and Hanoi instead of Moscow and Prague—at the expense of the West. Who can doubt that Sartre and his circle served as models for Susan Sontag and even Mary McCarthy, despite her earlier attacks on Simone de Beauvoir, in their political pilgrimages to Hanoi?

By that time, of course, Moscow was discredited even in Paris. After 1956, as Judt points out in an interesting analysis, "there began not so much a major shift in mood as a transfer of allegiances. The Communist question was not engaged, much less resolved: it was abandoned." This entailed an "escape from Europe" by the French intellectual Left, which now turned its attention to the third world. Yet not much had really changed:

> To the extent that *tiers-mondisme* [third worldism] required of intellectuals that they turn a

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> blind eye to terror or persecution, it hardly differed from the price extracted from fellow-travelers in the 40's and early 50's; . . . If there was a difference it was this: in order to live with the turbulent news from Eastern Europe it had been necessary to deny it, to manipulate and launder it. In the case of the third world, however, many French and other European intellectuals positively gloried in the news of violence, persecution, and poverty coming from Latin America, Africa, and Asia; it took altogether less dissimulation and self-delusion to justify the sufferings of non-Europeans.

In this respect, perhaps, the American intellectual Left from the 60's onward can be said to have at last been brought into perfect alignment with its French counterpart and model.

As a result of the intellectual and moral debacle whose history is so brilliantly traced in *Past Imperfect*, the audience for French thought, as Judt writes,

> shifted quite noticeably from Eastern and Southern Europe to Britain and the United States. . . . The special claims to attention of the French intelligentsia were now channeled through more abstruse media, with [Claude] Lévi-Strauss, [Roland] Barthes, [Jacques] Lacan, [Michel] Foucault, and their heirs replacing the generation of Camus and Sartre.

With this melancholy observation, Judt brings his intellectual history into the present.

We have it on the authority of Foucault's latest biographer, James Miller, that he, too, "had been inspired by Sartre's example":

> Throughout the 70's, the two men had marched side by side countless times: to protest the plight of factory workers, to agitate for better conditions in prisons, to demand that the French government pay more attention to refugees from Vietnam. Whatever their philosophical disagreements, which were many . . . , they were cut from the same cloth.

Which is, alas, undoubtedly true. For what, after all, was Foucault's project for "a new kind of biopolitics" but Sartre's notion of revolution in the service of "the authenticity of the individual" transferred to the realm of sexuality? Grateful as we may be that Sartre's direct influence has now faded and his stature as a political thinker is now permanently discredited, the flowers on his grave continue to poison the intellectual atmosphere. In this sense, at least, the story told in *Past Imperfect* is one that will continue to haunt us for a long time to come.

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Hebrew in America

Alan Mintz

THE great migrations that began at the end of the last century brought many foreign languages to these shores, but none lasted long in the new environment. While immigrants conversed in their own tongue in their homes and neighborhoods, their children, who grew up in the playgrounds and the public schools, adopted English as soon as they could. They were eager inductees into a process of Americanization in which English was the key to achievement and full participation.

Read one way, this is the story of a motley of peoples consolidated into a coherent civil society that could withstand the traumas of the Great Depression and World War II. Read another way, it is the story of a diversity of traditions folded into a single dominant culture. Yet however the story is read, the velocity with which it unfolded remains dizzying. Within the space of one generation, a polyphony of Italian, German, Polish, Ukrainian, Armenian, and Norwegian voices had been absorbed into the American vernacular.

The Jews were little different in this regard. Their headlong rush to embrace America was as abandoned as any other group's. The fond nostalgia that nowadays envelops the recollection of things Yiddish obscures the implacability of that language's disappearance from the American scene. When all is said and done, the mother tongue of East European Jewish immigrants was yielded up by its speakers rather quickly. The mass-circulation newspapers, the musical theater, the lodges and *landsmanschaften*, the labor movements—the whole immense enterprise of Yiddish popular culture was largely a one-generational phenomenon. Yiddish today is spoken only by the elderly, by pockets of loyalists, and by the ultra-Orthodox, for whom it functions as a bulwark against the encroachments of modernity.

But the Jews brought with them to this country another Jewish tongue, Hebrew, and the career of this old-new language proceeded along lines very different from its rival sibling. Whereas Yiddish was a genuine *mameh loshn*, a mother tongue spoken unselfconsciously by the masses, Hebrew was a revived classical literary language that was programmatically *made into* a mother tongue and adopted by a small cultural elite. Yet despite this preciousness, Hebrew succeeded in America in ways Yiddish did not.

Both languages boasted their poets and novelists and critics and literary journals, but it was Hebrew that for a long time imprinted its spirit upon the practice of Jewish education. Afternoon Hebrew schools, which were the dominant form of Jewish schooling between the two world wars and for long after, were not merely Sunday schools or religious schools; in a fundamental sense, they were, like their name, *Hebrew* schools. While admittedly few students came out of these schools speaking the language, the Hebrew national ethos, about which I shall have more to say below, pervaded everything that was taught.

Even today, Hebrew in America lives. As the language spoken by hundreds of thousands of Israelis who have settled here, it has ironically become what it never was before: a true immigrant mother tongue. As such, it unfortunately shows few signs of eluding the fate of the immigrant languages that have preceded it. At the same time—and in a manner more indigenous to the American Jewish community—Hebrew has emerged as a sought-after subject of study on American campuses, being offered at over 90 colleges and universities.

Yet for those who hold the language in high esteem, the current situation gives little cause for celebration. Even as a language of liturgy and learning, traditionally its central role, the record of Hebrew in America has been equivocal. Reform Judaism jettisoned large chunks of the language from the synagogue service (although it has recently made something of a comeback). Conservative Judaism has held more steadfastly to the text of the prayerbook, but beyond the hallowed formulas of the liturgy, knowledge of Hebrew is virtually nil; rare indeed is the Conservative congregant who can read with understanding a simple Bible story or comprehend more than an isolated term in the Sabbath service.

The situation is better in the Orthodox community because of the great importance accorded to the study of sacred texts. Yet if we take as evidence the enormous spate of recent translations of traditional texts into English, then the knowledge of Hebrew is in eclipse there as well. When

ALAN MINTZ is Joseph H. and Belle R. Braun Professor of Modern Hebrew Literature at Brandeis and the co-editor (with David G. Roskies) of *Prooftexts*, a journal of Jewish literary history.

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the modern-Orthodox movement was stronger in America, its commitment to religious Zionism was expressed in the centrality of Hebrew in many day schools and yeshivas. But since the turn to the Right in the Orthodox world, Hebrew has become a stepchild of the curriculum.

As a modern spoken language in America, the record of Hebrew is more painful still, especially in comparison to Israel. No one, of course, would seriously expect American Jews to chatter away in Hebrew, yet given the extraordinary involvement of American Jewish leaders with Israel—the study trips, the missions, the meetings, the joint ventures—it would be reasonable to look here for some echo of what Hebrew has become in the Jewish state, namely, a vital and supple communicative medium. The reality, however, is quite the opposite. Among lay leaders there are few indeed who can manage more than a handful of Hebrew words, and even those are often pronounced with an embarrassed awkwardness.

In practice, Hebrew has long been eclipsed by English as the national—and the international—language of the Jewish people. Even Israelis acknowledge this fact. When David Levy, then Israel's Foreign Minister, visited Washington several years ago and gave television press conferences in Hebrew with an English voice-over, it was an event remarkable for its novelty. Never in recent history had an Israeli official addressed the foreign press here—or in Israel, for that matter—in anything other than English.

MY CHRONICLE of the fallen fortunes of Hebrew might seem to be part of the common and tired complaint about the decline in standards in America—were it not for the fact that, in certain areas at least, the Jewish community is in the midst of something of a cultural boom. No observer of the scene over the past twenty years has missed the signs: the great number of Jewish books in stores; the vast expansion of Jewish-studies programs in universities as well as less formal adult courses in major communities; the growing number of non-Orthodox day schools in addition to the expanding pool of yeshiva students; the growing commitment of organized philanthropy to Jewish education and to cultural programming in general.

Just how deep these changes run is, to be sure, a matter of debate. Some argue that they presage the emergence of a genuine Jewish renaissance, the creative stirrings of a community finally coming into its own. Others say they are limited to a small elite and overshadowed by the grim fact that the main body of the community is being eroded by an increasingly shallow ethnicity and the greater ravages of intermarriage. Yet even the pessimists admit that, at least on some levels and in some sectors of the American Jewish community, there is an increased interest in Jewish culture, in both its religious and secular forms.

A crucial qualifier, however, must be added to these claims: whatever good things are happening, they are mostly happening in translation. Contemporary Hebrew novels and memoirs have been available in English for a long time, and they remain an important window onto the inner life of Israeli society. Less evident perhaps is the substantial energy being invested in translating the classic texts of the Jewish tradition into English. The proliferation of Jewish-studies courses on the campus would be unthinkable without anthologies made up of translated texts with introductions; rare indeed is the course in which a document is read in its original language.

This immense enterprise, which in quality and conception ranges from the august heights of the Yale Judaica Series to the hugely successful Art Scroll books with their idiosyncratically pious diction, involves not only translations of specific texts but the broader attempt to translate a culture as a whole into an American Jewish idiom. Most of the serious books that have appeared in recent years are, in one way or another, acts of popularization. They seek—at least the best of them do—to disentangle Jewish culture from its knotted rootedness in arcane documents written in difficult languages (not only Hebrew but Aramaic) and to present it as a system of ideas and practices that are intelligible in terms of how we experience the world in our own time and place. This is no less an instance of translation than taking an epistle by Maimonides and rendering it word-for-word into English.

Examples of popularization are everywhere: dictionaries of Jewish literacy; guides to religious observance; catalogues of Jewish books; introductions to the Talmud; surveys of Jewish history. Perhaps the most formidable is the new Jewish Publication Society commentary on the Torah, which, among other things, distills for the English reader what biblical scholarship (mostly in German) has learned from the study of ancient Near Eastern parallels (mostly in Akkadian and Ugaritic) to the Hebrew Scriptures. It is now possible for an intelligent layman to sit down with this commentary in hand (which includes the earlier JPS translation of the text proper), surround himself in addition with translations of the Torah commentaries of Rashi, Nachmanides, and many other more obscure exegetes, and engage in rather far-ranging study of the Bible—all without needing to know a word of Hebrew.

IS THIS wonderful or is it deplorable? I would argue that it is some of both. Happily—and not entirely predictably—we are witnessing (again, at some levels and in some sectors) a counter-assimilatory turn in the spirit of American Jewry, a desire for knowledge that is being answered by this widespread and energetic enterprise of translation and popularization. At the same time, however, something deeply disturbing lies at the heart of the same development.

There is, to begin with, a remarkably compla-

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cent acceptance of the indirection and mediation necessarily involved in translating a culture. American Jews, like Americans generally, often believe that when a foreign-language document is rendered into English, it is liberated from its disagreeable alienness and given the gift of clarity and intelligibility. There is little awareness of loss. Quite the opposite: as Americans we feel that we are only being given our due. Yet the very large truth discovered by Jews who become seriously interested in their Jewishness is, precisely, the truth of otherness. Having been born long ago, having developed under changing and complex circumstances, and having been transmitted largely in non-Western languages, Judaism and its culture are not "naturalized" into English without something substantial being renounced. The awareness of this loss is notably absent from the current celebration of Judaism in translation.

It is also surprising that the broad renewal of interest in things Jewish has not resulted in a greater number of people wishing to learn Hebrew. One might at least have expected that the close and often admiring involvement of many American Jews with Israel would have stimulated a desire for a firsthand acquaintance with the language in which that country's culture is lived. And the same should hold true for Jews who become absorbed in studying the documents of the religious tradition. It is not easy to understand why they do not long to have the veil removed so that they can apprehend directly the texts they so deeply esteem.

Hebrew, in all fairness, is a difficult language to acquire, and even if a serious desire to learn it were stimulated, there would be few ways for a determined adult to master it short of repairing to a seminary or a university. But the fact is that the American Jewish community has devoted little thought and fewer resources to making Hebrew available to those who want to learn it.

The neglect of Hebrew in America is a grave problem—much graver than might at first appear. For, in my judgment, the quality of American Jewish life as it evolves into the future *depends* on Hebrew cultural literacy.

THE case for the centrality of Hebrew in modern Jewish culture was made most authoritatively at the end of the 19th century in Russia by the founder of cultural Zionism, Ahad Ha-am, the pen name of Asher Ginsberg. In his analysis, what faced the Jewish community was less a crisis of the Jews (anti-Semitism and the need to find a solution to the untenability of Jewish life in the Russian empire) than a crisis of Judaism (the breakdown of the system of traditional religious values in the face of modernity). The solutions that came from Western Europe—Reform Judaism and the "scientific" historical study of Judaism known as *Wissenschaft des Judentums*—represented, to Ahad Ha-am, the wholesale adoption of foreign ideals in foreign languages. Although he was less clear about what should be the authentic shape of a post-traditional Jewish culture, he was perfectly persuaded of one unshakable fact: the key lay in the particular properties of the Hebrew language.

With the revival of Hebrew as a modern language, Ahad Ha-am foresaw a chance to avert disaster. Like all languages, Hebrew was an inherently conservative medium which retained terms long after their meanings had fallen into disuse. Because of its long and unbroken history—after the Bible and the Mishnah, it remained a creative literary language throughout the medieval and early modern periods—Hebrew was a unique repository of past cultural meanings.

According to Ahad Ha-am, if Hebrew could be made into a flexible medium of literary exchange and intellectual communication, and if it could be thus used to express the new forms that Jewish life would take, then an extraordinary opportunity would present itself. Rather than suffering an utter break with the religious tradition, modern Jewish culture could maintain a vital and, in a very real sense, inescapable connection with the past. At a minimum, this meant that the products of the new culture would be fashioned in the same language as the old. But more significantly, the disused but latent meanings embedded in the language would be available to be drawn upon in future construction of the new forms of Jewish life. Herein lay the great advantage: Jewish culture created in German, French, or English could guarantee no inherent link to the Jewish past, and once the linguistic tether was severed there was no easy way back. Hebrew restored the chain.

The case for the superiority of Hebrew over Yiddish rested on a similar set of arguments. Like Ladino, Judeo-Arabic, and Aramaic in their times and places, Yiddish was a significant and honorable Jewish language with great expressive properties. But in Ahad Ha-am's view, it was a poor candidate for the role of national Jewish language. It had arrived too late in the career of Jewish civilization to bear the full weight of the biblical and talmudic heritage, the body of classical verbal creativity that a resurgent Jewish people would have to look to for old terms that could be applied to new realities. Moreover, despite its millions of speakers, Yiddish was the tongue only of East European Jewry; it had little currency in the West (before the mass immigrations to America), and to Sephardim and Jews in Arab lands, Yiddish was entirely alien.

All this stood in sharp contrast to the potential, if not the reality, of Hebrew. Although in Ahad Ha-am's day almost no one spoke it and only a small elite used it as a cultural medium, Hebrew was the one language that had the power not only to bring the Jewish people into the modern world as Jews, but also to buttress their common peoplehood at a time when they would be entering very different civil societies and cultural spheres.

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Ahad Ha-am's ideas about Hebrew were not directed solely at the new Jewish settlement then taking shape in Palestine, but it was certainly there that his prescriptions were ultimately validated. In becoming a genuine spoken language over the course of the 20th century, Hebrew succeeded by exploiting the resources embedded in its biblical and rabbinic strata not simply to name new things but to create a nuanced and synonym-rich instrument for the expression of complex ideas and feelings. It accomplished its greatest success as a force for national unity in the absorption of Jews from very different cultures (too much so, according to those who see its hegemony as having been achieved at the expense of other cultural traditions).

Less evident perhaps but more crucial has been the role of Hebrew in preventing secular Israeli culture from losing touch with Jewish history and religion. The fact that there is no Saturday in Israel but only *Shabbat*, the ability of educated Israelis to read the Bible in the original or to pick up a novel by Agnon—these are trite but powerful examples of how the use of Hebrew makes a certain intimacy with Jewishness inescapable. You can reject the claims of Jewishness, but, though many writers have tried, you cannot invent a Hebrew that is free of its associations.

THERE is a pungent irony in the stunning success of Hebrew in Israel. Ahad Ha-am himself was not a great optimist when it came to the possibility, or even the advisability, of mass immigration to Palestine and the popularization of the Hebrew language. Both prospects were still open questions when he died in 1927, after having moved as a sick man from London to Tel Aviv five years earlier. Although he defined the Land of Israel as the spiritual center of the new Hebrew culture, he thought it imperative to spread knowledge of this culture in the Diaspora as well, because, in the absence of territory and autonomous institutions in a post-religious era, Hebrew would necessarily be the "glue" holding Jewish life together and connecting it to the past.

As it happens, not all the young men and women who were quickened by the idea of national renewal at the beginning of this century did settle in Palestine; numbers of them came to America instead. From the vantage point of the present it may seem quixotic and even a touch delusional to think that a great Hebrew culture could develop on these shores. But America had great cultural institutions, freedom, prosperity, and millions of Jews, whereas the *yishuv* (the new Zionist settlement in Palestine) was impoverished, sparsely settled, lacking in any ambient high culture, and clutched by an Ottoman empire careering into the cataclysm of the Great War.

The pioneer Hebraists who came to America in the years before World War I were energized by Ahad Ha-am's conviction that, whatever the fortunes of the *yishuv*, the renewal of the Jewish spirit would have to take place in the Diaspora, too. In obedience to this imperative, they set about establishing the components of a literary culture: newspapers and journals, publishing houses, literary clubs and writers' associations. Most of all, they wrote Hebrew literature: stories, novels, essays, and especially poems, thousands and thousands of Hebrew poems, about New York, about the changing seasons of the New England landscape, about American Indian legends and Negro spirituals, and, always, about the loneliness of being a Hebrew writer in America. This phenomenon—the strange but substantial career of American Hebraism during the 1920's, 30's, and 40's—is a lost and largely unchronicled chapter in the cultural history of American Jewry.

On some aspects of the development of American Jewish life, the Hebraist movement had scant influence; on others, its influence was considerable. The principled choice to write in Hebrew consigned the works of Hebrew poets, novelists, and essayists to a dwindling pool of readers. But in the case of Jewish education, as I remarked above, Hebraism left a significant imprint.

Beginning around World War I, Jewish schooling in America was taken over by educators with a determined Hebraist bent. The characteristic institution of the time was the afternoon Hebrew school, whose curriculum, though adapted to the needs of immigrant parents, was a direct expression of Ahad Ha-am's ideology. The emphasis was on Jewish peoplehood, modern Hebrew language, the Bible as read in Hebrew, an attachment to the Land of Israel and to the culture of the new *yishuv*, and synagogue skills and the holidays presented not as religious law and duty but rather as "customs and ceremonies."

Hebrew was central to these schools not just as a subject but also as a pedagogy. The schools aspired to teach all subjects *in* Hebrew, according to what was called the natural method. In major cities there were Hebrew high schools as well, and a network of Hebrew colleges which served not only to prepare future teachers but to offer courses in advanced Jewish studies at a time when they were not yet being taught in the university. In the 40's and 50's, a network of summer camps put a new emphasis on Hebrew as a medium for the arts and recreation and the everyday life outside the classroom and the formal curriculum.

Today, these schools have largely disappeared or have been folded into congregational religious schools in which Hebrew is next to nonexistent. The Hebrew colleges have become community institutes of adult education, and genuine Hebrew-speaking summer camps simply are no more. The decline of these institutions is the result largely of far-ranging changes in postwar American Jewish life, especially the demographic shift from the city to the suburbs, but the afternoon Hebrew schools had additional problems

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of their own. The fact that they always played a "supplementary" role to the main action of the public schools severely limited their moral authority over their not-always-willing students. Hebraist ideology, furthermore, was not well equipped to respond to the search for religious and existential values that emerged with postwar prosperity. Anyone who taught or studied in these schools in the 50's and 60's knows just how faded by then were their clouds of glory.

THE heyday of American Hebraism has indeed passed. Yet in the climate of translation and popularization that currently envelops the American Jewish community, the ideas of the movement deserve a serious second look.

The main idea is very simple: Jewish experience can be adequately understood only through Jewish language. In this conception, the relation of Hebrew to Jewish culture is not merely that of a key or a gateway or a path—or any other instrumental image one might suggest. Rather, Jewish culture is embodied *by* Hebrew and embedded *in* it. This is not just a semantic point but a point about semantics, and it can best be conveyed through several very common examples.

Take the concept of philanthropy. The English term charity, deriving from the Latin-Christian term *caritas*, designates an act of benevolence toward the needy, motivated by an abundance of love for God's creatures. In contrast, the Hebrew term *tsedakah*, related to *tsedek* (justice), emphasizes both the legal obligation to help and the deservingness (hence the dignity) of those who receive the help. Or take the Hebrew word for law, *halakhah*; in contrast to the English word, which is based on the Latin *lex* and implies decrees from above that limit personal freedom, *halakhah* is taken from the verb to walk or go, which suggests a way of life and a path to walk on. And then there is *shalom* for peace, which comes from the adjective meaning whole or hale, and designates a condition which is not merely the cessation of hostilities but a state of harmony and connectedness.

These small examples, and there are hundreds like them, are not merely etymological curiosities or bits of gratuitous erudition but real windows onto the nuances of cultural difference. As they branch out and intersect, these terms create both the cultural system of Judaism and its unique texture. Each term represents a cluster of value concepts and a particular way of viewing the world. To use such terms with understanding means to think differently about, say, philanthropy, law, or peace. Yes, the terms can be translated and explained, but a culture is a culture precisely because of what does *not* need to be translated. At a certain level, translation is an unnatural act, severing cultural content from the language that embodies it.

Knowing Hebrew presents a different, and, I would argue, an ultimately more useful model of what it means to possess literacy in Jewish culture. If one knows Hebrew—and by this I mean only a basic competence which enables one to work through simple texts with the aid of dictionaries, glosses, and even translations—then with this single attainment one is in a position to read a rather extraordinary range of documents: the story of God's call to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis, or the principles of jurisprudence in the Mishnah, or Maimonides's discussion of the laws of repentance, or a hasidic tale by Nahman of Bratslav, or the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel, or a love poem by Yehuda Amichai, or a newspaper account of Knesset debates, or many, many other differing expressions of Jewish culture and experience. It matters little whether one accepts Ahad Ha-am's premise of a deep-running Hebraic national spirit that unites all these cultural expressions. The crucial practical fact is that a single "ticket" purchases admission to a vast gallery spanning the centuries of multifarious Jewish creativity.

JEWISH society down through the ages has offered an extraordinarily sustained instance of what we today call cultural literacy: although only a limited number of Jews in any generation were scholars, almost all males possessed a familiarity with the basic texts of the tradition as well as a capacity to parse them in the original Hebrew. Just such a common store of basic knowledge and skills is what the cultural-literacy movement in America has advocated as a bulwark against the crumbling standards of our schools. And it is precisely what American Jews are in the process of losing or discarding.

If even a fraction of the intellectual resources currently being devoted to the task of translating and popularizing the Jewish experience into the American idiom were to be diverted instead toward the task of making it easier to attain a basic Hebrew literacy, the gain would be substantial. It would simultaneously permit access to the sources of Jewish tradition, on the one hand, and to the dynamics of modern Jewish culture and Israeli society, on the other. Moreover, at a time when the world Jewish community is being riven by cleavages, Hebrew remains a rare example of common ground. It is used by both the religious and the secular communities in Israel, and it stands as a potential bridge as well between the diverging fates of American and Israeli Jewry.

As Ahad Ha-am observed, the Hebrew language, at some latent level, keeps all these diverse possibilities in play. An American Jewish culture that fully participated in the continuity of Jewish civilization would be one in which the norm of Hebrew literacy were once again restored to its formerly normal state.

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The Encyclopedias

Andrea Levin

EVERYONE knows that Arab propaganda has become more effective in recent years. But it is not generally known that the Arab spin on Middle East history and the Arab-Israeli conflict, once accepted only in openly partisan circles, is more and more becoming the standard version even in mainstream reference works. These include single-volume works like *Webster's New World Encyclopedia* and *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, as well as a costly multivolume encyclopedia like *Collier's*, and—most shocking of all—even the venerable *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

Here many entries related to the Middle East are pervaded by the view that indigenous and blameless Palestinian Arabs were robbed of their land and their rights by colonialist European Jews. To support this view, not only is the history of our own time falsified, but ancient history is also rewritten in such a way as to deny the Jewish people any claim to the Land of Israel and to establish Arab priority there. Thus, a familiar feature of Arab propaganda—the utterly unfounded myth that today's Palestinian Arabs are descendants of the Canaanites who were displaced by the Hebrews—is often accepted as fact.

Webster's New World Encyclopedia, which is aimed at younger readers, is one work that spreads this lie (in its entry on "Palestine"). And to make matters worse, *Webster's* also notes that Palestine "was in ancient times dominated in turn by Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Macedonia, the Ptolemies, the Seleucids, and the Roman and Byzantine empires." Omitted from this list is the ancient, continuous, and, for long periods, predominant presence of the Jewish people in the region throughout 3,000 years.

But if the Jews are airbrushed out of the picture, a nonexistent Palestinian state is spliced-in via the statement in a later section that "A series of Arab-Israeli wars resulted in the total loss of the Palestinian state. . . ." Children reading this passage will, naturally, not be aware that no such state has *ever* existed and that this invention is designed to advance current Arab ambitions in the Middle East.

THE spurious Canaanite claim has also turned up in a controversial article in *National Geographic* magazine entitled "Who Are the Palestinians?" (July 1992). Philip Mattar, associate editor of the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, a Washington-based publication that is funded in part by Kuwait University and that promotes the Palestinian agenda in academic circles, is cited by *National Geographic* as its source.

Mattar is currently involved in the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East*, a four-volume work to be issued by Macmillan in 1994. Others associated with this project have, like Mattar himself, expressed hostile and extremist positions on Israel, and some have contributed to his journal. So, too, with the newly published *Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*. Edited by Joel Krieger, chairman of the political-science department at Wellesley College, it contains articles on the Middle East and related subjects written by *Journal of Palestine Studies* regulars.

One of these is Zachary Lockman, an associate professor of history at Harvard and a member of the Advisory Committee of the virulently anti-Israel Jewish Committee on the Middle East (JCOME). This is the person who was chosen to write the *Oxford Companion* entries on "Zionism," "Ben-Gurion," and the "Balfour Declaration."

Not surprisingly, each of Lockman's contributions conveys a striking animosity toward Israel. The "Zionism" entry offers this observation:

> Israel remains in theory and practice a Zionist state, in that it officially defines itself not as a state of its citizens, Jews and Arabs, but as the state of all Jews everywhere, who under Israeli law have the automatic right to immigrate to Israel, acquire citizenship, and enjoy privileges denied to Israel's non-Jewish citizens. This self-definition and the practices which flow from it, along with Israeli military rule over Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, were cited as justification for the controversial 1975 UN General Assembly resolution classifying Zionism as a form of racism (repealed 1991).

This is, of course, nonsense. Israel is not "the state of all Jews everywhere." It is the state of those Jews (and non-Jews) who become its citizens and thereby acquire the rights and obligations of citizenship. As for the grotesquely unjust United Nations resolution equating Zionism with racism, it was, in fact, a cold-war maneuver by the Soviet bloc in connivance with the Arabs, and a mode of assaulting Israel's legitimacy where warfare had failed to destroy it. But in Lockman's locution this resolution becomes a plausible expression of Arab resentment against the restoration of stateless and persecuted Jews to a nation that offers them legal and physical safety.

Furthermore, while virtually ev-

ANDREA LEVIN, *whose contributions to Israel Watch include "The Voice of NPR" (January 1993) and "PBS Does It Again" (July 1992), is national president of CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America).*

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ery Arab country has defined itself by statute as an Islamic state and relegated all non-Muslims to juridically secondary status, Israel accords full juridical rights to all its citizens irrespective of religion. Indeed, Arab citizens of Israel enjoy full political freedom—more, as it happens, than Arab citizens anywhere in the Arab world. They vote for and are elected to the Israeli parliament; criticize the Israeli government, if they so choose, in the freest Arab newspapers in the Middle East; assemble freely; attend universities of their choice; work in every sector of civilian society; and travel as they like.

No hint of any of this shows up in Lockman's article.

ANOTHER contributor to the *Oxford Companion* is Ann Mosley Lesch, associate director of the Center for Arab and Islamic Studies at Villanova University, and the former Jerusalem director of the American Friends Service Committee. In that capacity she became involved in controversy with the Israeli government over charges that she was working on behalf of the PLO. Whether or not the charges were justified, her entry on the "Palestine Liberation Organization" in the *Oxford Companion* makes the PLO sound like nothing so much as a do-gooding Kiwanis club.

Rather than dealing candidly with the long and bloody PLO record of calculated murder of schoolchildren, worshipers, commuters, farmers, tourists, and diplomats—a record that has made the term "Palestinian terrorist" synonymous with airplane hijacking, hostage-taking, and indiscriminate carnage—Lesch barely alludes to it. And to the minimal extent that she does, she justifies it as a product of "Palestinian despair."

Similarly, the PLO's reign of terror in southern Lebanon that touched off fifteen years of bloody civil war is all but ignored in a passage describing the organization's good works (the establishment of hospitals, handicraft shops, light industries, and research centers). PLO collaboration with international terror organizations, including the Baader-Meinhof gang and the Red Brigades, goes unmentioned, as does the PLO's relationship with neo-Nazi groups in Europe and totalitarian Commmunist regimes.

In the same vein, the *Oxford Companion*'s "Yasir Arafat" entry, written by Helena Cobban, the author of a sympathetic book on the PLO, contains not a single reference to Arafat's intimate involvement in terror.

During the Gulf war Cobban ridiculed the "myth" of Israel's strategic value to the United States, blaming Israel for anti-American sentiment in the Arab world and urging the U.S. to focus on protecting its own interests. But despite her vocal concern for American interests where Israel is involved, she fails here to inform her readers of Arafat's involvement in the 1973 assassination of the American ambassador to the Sudan, Cleo A. Noel, Jr., and his deputy, George Curtis Moore, one of America's first black diplomats.

Likewise, all the thousands of terror attacks on Israeli and non-Israeli innocents are censored out of her article. The only intimation of the truth is an elliptical and apologetic reference to Arafat's having lent "some" support to "international terror operations designed to bring pressure on Israel and call attention to the Palestinian cause."

THE author of the *Oxford Companion*'s glowing entry on the "Intifada" is Rashid Khalidi, yet another contributor to the *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Khalidi is also an adviser to the Palestinian team which has been negotiating with Israel, as well as the current president of the pro-Arab Middle East Studies Association, the director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Chicago, and a media spokesman for the Palestinian perspective.

Khalidi's work is also to be found in a recent edition of *Collier's Encyclopedia*, where he contributes the entry on "Palestine, Modern." It is doubtful that any reputable encyclopedia has ever published so crude an assault on historical truth.

Khalidi begins with a muddled and deceitful passage asserting the prior existence of a Palestinian state:

> During the first half of the 20th century the term "Palestine" applied to a state for three decades, starting in 1917, when the region west of the Jordan—together with Transjordan, across the river—passed from Turkish rule to British rule. . . . [In 1948 Palestinian Arabs] rejected the plan to partition their country.

Yet to say it again, no Palestinian Arab state has *ever* existed—not in the 20th century and not in any other.

Compounding his sins of commission, Khalidi, himself a historian, neglects obvious and essential aspects of the record offered by earlier Arab historians that are inconsistent with his own mendacious rendering. For example, in *The Arab Awakening* (1939), George Antonious described the status of Palestine:

> Except where otherwise specified, the term Syria will be used to denote the whole of the country of that name which is now split up into mandated territories of (French) Syria and the Lebanon, and (British) Palestine and Transjordan.

That is, a vast Arab polity called Syria was seen as encompassing not only the small notch of western Palestine but all of modern-day Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. In 1946 another leading Arab historian, Philip Hitti, decried the increasingly prevalent usage of the term "Palestinian" because in those days it was generally taken to mean the *Jews* of Palestine. Declared Hitti: "There is no such thing as Palestine in history, absolutely not."

Khalidi is prepared not only to suppress information that negates his case but flatly to misrepresent the facts. He writes:

> On Nov. 2, 1917, while British and Arab forces were fighting to conquer Palestine from the Turks, the Zionists obtained a promise, published in the form of a letter from Balfour to Lord Rothschild, that the British government would support "the establishment in Palestine of a

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national home for the Jewish people."

But it was Palestinian *Jews*, not Palestinian Arabs, who fought with the British to throw off Turkish rule in Palestine. In the summer of 1917 Britain had formed a Jewish Legion which aided British and Australian units in driving out the Turks. Palestinian Jews also assisted in vital intelligence-gathering behind enemy lines. No such efforts were made by Palestinian Arabs.

Similar malformations of fact litter Khalidi's account of immigration to Palestine and Jewish land purchase there. Terming Jews "colonists," Khalidi cites floods of European arrivals, many of them "illegal," who are said to have overwhelmed, displaced, and worsened the lot of the indigenous Arab inhabitants.

Here Khalidi fails to acquaint readers with the surge of Muslim immigration into Turkish-ruled Palestine in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He is also silent on the large immigration, both legal and illegal, of Arabs into Palestine between the world wars. As many as 100,000 Arabs poured into Palestine from Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon, and even Sudan during the period of the British Mandate, in response to the rejuvenation wrought by Zionist development. Wage scales, particularly for Arab peasants in fledgling industries and in agriculture, were unparalleled in the region, and advances in health care brought reductions in infant mortality.

Even within Palestine, Arabs gravitated to areas of Jewish development: the Arab population in Arab towns grew only slightly between the wars (Gaza's actually decreased), but the number of Arabs in such predominantly Jewish cities as Jerusalem and Haifa leaped by 97 and 216 percent respectively. Obviously, information such as this is excluded because it conflicts with the view that Zionists brought devastation to the Arabs, rather than opportunity.

THE political record in Khalidi's account is no less egregiously manipulated to emphasize Arab victimization and to minimize Arab responsibility for failure and violence. The recommendation of the 1937 Peel Commission proposing partition is described without noting that the Arabs rejected it while the Jews accepted it. Arab instigation of the 1948 war is obscured in the statement that "Fighting between Arabs and Jews in Palestine broke out almost immediately after the UN resolution on partition." Excised from the record are the exhortations of Arabs like Azzam Pasha, secretary general of the Arab League, who declared on May 15, 1948: "This will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Mongolian massacres and the Crusades."

The section on the Six-Day War is based on a similar obfuscation. Khalidi avers that Palestinian Arab groups had pushed the Arab-Israeli conflict to the top of the Arab agenda and that "The resulting pressures on the Arab regimes launched a cycle of provocation, retaliation, threat, and escalation that culminated in June 1967 in a new war between Israel and the Arab states." From this, readers are hardly likely to become aware of the aggressive frenzy toward the Jews stirred up by Arab leaders; the declarations of Palestinian Arab leaders that the annihilation of the Jews was at hand; the mobilization of Arab armies, including the massing of 100,000 Egyptian soldiers in the Sinai; and other acts of war that led ultimately to the Arab defeat.

This pervasive masking of Arab aggression and violence produces a particularly surreal picture of the PLO. Khalidi notes "vicissitudes" endured by the PLO in Lebanon "as a result of civil warfare in which it was deeply involved. . . ." But, of course, the PLO was a primary cause of that civil war. Nor does Khalidi cite a single instance of the organization's calculated murder of innocents and wreaking of global mayhem. Such acts are attributed to "dissident factions, generally backed by Arab regimes at odds with the PLO." Moreover, Khalidi's bland assertion that the PLO eventually confined itself to "attacks" within Israel's borders conveys no sense of the atrocities perpetrated, including the mass murder of schoolchildren at Ma'alot, but implies rather that the shift in tactics was a sign of moderation.

Not content with the spurious history of Khalidi's "Palestine, Modern," *Collier's* assigned its entry on "Israel" to none other than Zachary Lockman. As usual, Lockman finds Israel guilty at every turn. The legal system, he alleges, offers only token freedoms, the government alienates and subordinates Israeli Arabs and confiscates their land, and women are subject to "gender stereotypes."

SCANDALOUS as all this is, what is even more shocking is that the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the most prestigious of the general-reference publications, has also succumbed to the accelerated Arab campaign to overturn the truth about the Arab-Israeli conflict. Virtually all the misinformation and disinformation found in the other reference works—the distorted presentation of Palestinian Arabs as the indigenous people; the denigration of the Jewish presence; the manufactured pedigree of Palestinian Arab nationhood; the silence about Arab aggression against the Jews before and after 1948; the whitewashing of the PLO; the false characterizations of the Israeli polity—are also found in the latest edition of *Britannica*.

A co-author of key parts of the post-1900 section of a newly created entry entitled "Palestine" is Walid Khalidi, cousin of Rashid Khalidi. Walid Khalidi is a research fellow at Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies and a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Palestine Studies*. He has close ties to the PLO and has served on the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the peace negotiations.

The primary author, William Ochsenwald, a professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, has in other writings characterized Israel's War of Independence as "expansionism" in which "injustice" was done to the Arabs. A textbook by Ochsenwald designates the PLO killers of Israeli children at Ma'alot and Kiryat Shemona as "commandos" and reserves the term

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"terrorism" for Jewish actions alone.

The *Britannica*'s rendition of "Palestine" parallels the one in *Collier's*, systematically obfuscating, omitting, and distorting historical realities which are discomfiting to Arab claims.

For instance, in describing the 1920 San Remo conference of the victorious World War I allies, Khalidi and Ochsenwald make no mention of its explicit endorsement of the Balfour Declaration calling for creation of a Jewish National Home as the basis of the British Mandate in Palestine. Nor do they tell us that the Mandate's territory included the area of modern-day Jordan.

The same deliberate misrepresentation occurs in the authors' description of the British violation of the San Remo agreement two years later, when more than 75 percent of the area designated for a Jewish National Home was severed to create an Arab state. Reversing the order of events, they state that "under protest from the Zionists," Transjordan was "excluded" from the Mandate. But Transjordan did not exist prior to 1922; it was created out of the area subtracted from the original Mandate territory. It need hardly be said that the authors make no reference to the subsequent British expulsion of all Jews from the newly-created Arab state.

Under the subheading "Arab Grievances" (there is no matching "Jewish Grievances"), Arab resentment of Jewish immigration is described in detail. Once again, the dramatic immigration by Arabs is elided.

Events listed under the subheading "World War II" are also dishonestly rendered. Britain's devastating policy of bowing to Arab pressure and blocking Jewish flight from Nazi-dominated Europe is related this way:

> Publication in February of 1940 of the new land-transfer regulations and announcement in November of 1940 of Britain's decision to accommodate illegal Jewish immigrants outside Palestine caused a recrudescence of the activities of the Zionist underground organizations.

In fact, for the few Jews who were able to escape Europe to Palestine, British "accommodation" meant transfer to the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius where tropical diseases, hunger, and exposure killed many.

Khalidi and Ochsenwald report the emergence of the Irgun and the Stern Gang and their involvement in "widespread attacks, culminating in the murder of Lord Moyne, British minister of state in Cairo." Passed over in silence are the events that provoked the assassination—such as Lord Moyne's role in preventing the admission to Palestine of the nearly 800 Jews aboard the disabled refugee ship *Struma*, all but one of whom subsequently drowned when the ship was forced back to sea and sank. And in contrast to the critical references to the Irgun, the ignominious actions of the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, are whitewashed. An ardent supporter of Hitler who had advocated the extermination of Jewish children, the Mufti is described simply as broadcasting "appeals" to fellow Arabs to "ally" with the Axis against Britain and Zionism.

The section on the assault in 1948 by both Palestinian Arabs and the armies of neighboring states against the newborn state of Israel is misleadingly headed "Civil War," as though the aggression were mutually initiated and intended. The authors cite as salient events the death of an Arab hero, Abd al-Qadir al-Husseini, and the massacre of Arabs at Deir Yassin. Nothing is said about all the various massacres of Jews by Arab forces. The grim toll of 6,000 Jewish dead is also omitted, as is any trace of the perspective of the besieged Jewish community, armed with ragtag weaponry and fighting to survive the openly avowed intent of the Arabs to destroy them.

Britannica's account of the period from 1948 to the present, written by Ochsenwald alone, is just as bad. The actions and statements of Arab nations as well as those of Palestinian Arabs are consistently sanitized; the calls by Nasser, leader of the Arab world, and by other Arab leaders, for the destruction of Israel are excluded; the creation of the PLO in 1964 is said to aim at the "total liberation of Palestine" with no mention of the violence enshrined in its founding charter. PLO factions, including the PFLP, DFLP, and others, perpetrators of some of the most heinous terrorist actions of our time, are listed without any reference to their activities.

In general, the bloody history of the PLO is mostly concealed, the perpetrators labeled guerrillas, not terrorists. *Britannica* readers learn of an airplane hijacking in which "all the passengers were freed." The coastal-road massacre of 1978—in which a tourist was murdered on the beach, a bus commandeered, and more than 100 civilians killed or wounded by gunfire and grenades—is termed a "raid" by "Palestinian guerrillas." There is not a word about the 1972 massacres in Munich and at Lod airport.

The PLO's "Ten Point Program" of 1974, calling for the liberation of "Palestine" in stages through a combination of tactical negotiations and ongoing violence, is expunged from the record. Instead, the year 1974 is remembered for Yasir Arafat's infamous appearance at the United Nations. Ochsenwald cites this event as one among a number of PLO "gains" in the international arena, and fails to mention that Arafat used the occasion to urge the extinction of Israel.

Nor does the depiction of the Six-Day War contain a hint of Arab aggression, stating merely that "The Arab-Israeli War of 1967 devastated the Arab nations." The Yom Kippur War, in which Israel was attacked by its Arab neighbors and nearly overrun, is barely touched upon.

And so on, and on, and on.

In a telling final paragraph in the "Palestine" entry, Ochsenwald writes with enthusiasm of the "vitality" of the PLO and cautions that "For Israel to acknowledge Palestinian nationalism would cast doubt on the moral basis of the whole Zionist enterprise." But only in the fraudulent account offered by the *Britannica*—which denigrates the Jewish presence, glides

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over Arab aggression, and misrepresents the nature of modern Israel—is there a reason for doubting "the moral basis of the whole Zionist enterprise."

Robert McHenry, *Britannica*'s editor-in-chief, has recently responded to criticisms of the encyclopedia's version of Middle East history and the Arab-Israeli conflict by acknowledging some errors of detail but ignoring major areas of distortion, including those noted here, and instead defending the *Britannica*'s entries and accusing the critics of misrepresentation. Not surprisingly, he has failed to address the question of why the encyclopedia should have delineated a picture so biased both in myriad particulars and in cumulative effect as to seem designed for Arab political purposes.

On these grounds alone, readers may want to direct their own questions to a venerable publication that has allowed its good name to be sullied by the same lies and distortions that have disfigured lesser reference works and that have made a mockery of a once-trusted repository of sound and accurate information.

Observations

The Whitney Fiasco & the Critics

Richard Ryan

Among the more interesting aspects of the ongoing culture war is the fact that the avant-garde, which one might have thought would be off the map by this late stage in the 20th century, continues to cause problems. Robert Mapplethorpe, Bret Easton Ellis, Camille Paglia, Ice-T—such provocateurs have demonstrated that people are still ready to get worked up about art, literature, and aesthetics generally.

Consider, for instance, the dramatic way in which the contemporary art world of New York managed to make a spectacle of itself this past winter and spring. In this case the terrible infants happened to be sprawled all over the Whitney Museum, the occasion for their bad behavior being the 1993 Biennial—though the scene of the irrationality could just as easily have been Los Angeles or Cleveland, since outrageous and unforgivable things have been exhibited in museums all over the country for the last several years.

The Biennial is the Whitney's alternate-year megashow, which claims to present the highlights of the current art scene. No one is ever particularly satisfied with it, but this time the show's overtly thematic and ideological slant got people more aroused than usual; the art collected had been chosen specifically for its social relevance, and it generated a smog of criticism which, more even than the art itself, was symptomatic of the current state of our culture.

To say the Biennial was ideological is not to say that it echoed the Old Left politics of class and power struggle; it was steeped, rather, in the new cultural politics of race and gender. This is a body of art which trafficks in no explicit theories, projects no intellectual content beyond a pervasive sense of victimhood, espouses nothing more than a confrontational attitude that rotates through the stations of self-pity, self-absorption, and malice.

The show did claim to have an organizing concept, however, which was described by its chief curator, Elizabeth Sussman, as that of a "refigured but fragmented collectivity." In such a collectivity, artists are encouraged to retain their own gender- or race-specific identity in a sort of pluralist free-for-all. Here the personal is invariably political, and vice versa: when artists manifest their identity as "people of color" or "same-sexers" or whatever, they are by definition making a creative statement. It follows that to criticize these creative statements is to criticize the rights of oppressed identity groups to self-expression—and that is an enterprise that publications like the *New York Times*, especially wary these days of offending officially protected minorities, would rather avoid. No wonder so many of the critics were needlessly timid when confronting the Biennial.

Remarkably enough, one of the most offensive pieces in the Bien-

Richard Ryan, *a writer and business consultant living in New York, contributed "1492 and All That" to our May 1992 issue.*

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nial was Daniel J. Martinez's design for the metal admission tags sold to visitors on entering. Each tag had inscribed on it a portion of the phrase, "I CAN'T IMAGINE EVER WANTING TO BE WHITE." (Some lucky patrons got tags with the whole phrase.) The intended joke, of course, was that the Biennial's bleached and bourgeois attendees were being forced to pin on their breasts a statement of racial hatred (transfigured into a confession of racial guilt) in order to get into the show.

The critic Deborah Solomon, whose tag contained the fragment "EVER WANTING," made the witty observation in her review in the *Wall Street Journal* that this was an accurate description of the works she saw. (She might have added that the tags reading "I CAN'T" bore the curators' collective motto.) But the tags also nicely reflected the graffiti-artist mentality evident throughout the show: spray your message somewhere inappropriate and you validate your creative impulse.

NOR was the admission tag the only booby-trapped artifact in the Biennial. The pretaped Acoustiguide, normally a lulling companion for docile museumgoers everywhere, had in this case been transformed into a self-indulgent PC fest that was even listed in the catalogue as one of the "pieces" in the exhibit. Prepared by the performance artist Andrea Frazier, the tape strung together the unplanned responses of the Whitney's director, David Ross, and the show's curators to questions Frazier asked. A few representative selections recreate the spirit in which the Biennial was staged:

"We live in a divided nation ideologically in terms of, uh, class, and in terms of, uh, racial disharmony."

"I think for our audience this work is difficult, because it does deal with voices that have not previously really been heard in the Whitney Museum."

"I think of myself sometimes as an average museumgoer. I know I'm not average but I—I do try to put myself in different positions."

"You know, I mean, on one level I would say this piece depends on a certain level of theoretical knowledge, obviously, but then, I think on some days maybe it doesn't demand all that, you know? Maybe . . . it's very hard for me to say, really, what things people need, you know? I guess I know what I need."

"That's what I love about art. There's no right and there's no wrong, in a sense."

[And this from chief curator Elizabeth Sussman:] "If I . . . if I were able to write my imaginary text to the introduction to this Biennial, it would probably be, um, somewhat . . . I would try . . . I don't know how I would do it. I could never do that. Let's say I love, or I loved, um, I don't know who. I don't know."

Anyone who trudged through the Biennial without listening to this tape—with its clichés, its inarticulate confusion, and its numbingly correct politics—missed a wonderful bit of comic relief and boomerang satire.

As on the Acoustiguide, so in the exhibit itself, personal attitude saturated everything: even the little wall plaques identifying pieces were turned over to the artists for their free-associative statements. (On the Acoustiguide, Elizabeth Sussman denounced the whole idea of informative wall captions: they "clog my dam.") To help viewers help themselves, the Biennial staff also courteously provided a "reading room" close to the entrance of the show. Since the books were nailed to a shelf, however, it was nearly impossible to sit and comfortably read any of them. Still, the contents were easily enough gleaned from their titles: *The Gulf War Reader*; *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*; *Inside the L.A. Riots*; *Women, AIDS & Activism*; and so on.

NATURALLY, a major function of all the propaganda was to distract one from the actual art, which was better than a stick in the eye, but not much. One of the most egregious and widely reported entries was Sue Williams's romper room, in which childish cartoons were scrawled along the walls, charmless pictoglyphs depicting various "women's complaints": eating disorders, pornography, men in general. In the center was an enormous puddle of plastic vomitus (a "vomit rug," one enthusiastic critic called it). Another meaning-laden gesture was Fred Wilson's *Re: Claiming Egypt*, a room full of Egyptian artifacts draped with T-shirts and cheap jewelry straight out of current hip-hop culture—an effort, one supposes, to embrace the movement by African-American ethnocentrists to appropriate ancient Egypt as their legacy.

In this Biennial, bad manners—usually a character flaw closely linked to the desire for self-expression—were taken as a sign of talent. One entry, Pat Ward Williams's photomural of homeboys sitting on a stoop glaring out at the viewer, had sprayed across its surface the message, "WHAT YOU LOOKN AT"—the point being to embrace street aggression and vandalism as the underclass's preferred forms of personal presentation. Another exhibitionistic entry, Nan Goldin's candid, grungy photographs of drag queens *en famille*, drove home the point that there is a little transvestite in all of us.

Perhaps to underscore the show's independence from traditional notions of high art, almost half the works were on film or videotape. I found it impossible to see all of these, but the videos I did watch were predictably sloppy and underrealized. Film continues to be one of those art forms (like opera) which require substantial monetary and material resources to produce; by contrast, video, film's stepchild, holds a kind of low-budget, egalitarian appeal. This was clear from what I saw at the Biennial, which looked less like art than like a series of sketchbooks by filmmakers-in-waiting.

Suppressing traditional "wall art" in favor of an alternative medium like video is merely the latest, uninspired trick of the "painting-is-dead" school which has been around at least since the emergence of photography in the 19th century. Another recent but unoriginal medium eating up hundreds of acres of New York gallery space, and amply represented at the Bi-

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ennial, is installation art, a sort of spin-off from performance art and stage design.

Tellingly, the larger flaws of the show were reproduced in its various installations. There was, for instance, Pepón Osorio's *The Scene of the Crime (Whose Crime?)*, which recreated—in bloodstained furnishings and a sheet-draped body—the aftermath of a murder in an ostentatiously tacky Puerto Rican living room; the work was meant to deflate stereotypes of Latin violence and vulgarity, but instead wallowed in them. This sort of self-reflexive pointlessness undercut virtually every installation: feminists got bogged down in sexual imagery; black or Hispanic artists stumbled all over their own insecurities about being stereotyped.

SINCE the Biennial was drawn from allegedly oppressed artists working in allegedly neglected media—all those "voices . . . not previously heard," as the Acoustiguide had it—most of the exhibitors must have been unknown to any but die-hard gallery crawlers. One big name, however, was involved in the general embarrassment: Cindy Sherman, the photographer/image-maker. Sherman's work has been widely circulated, and some of her earlier efforts, spooky black-and-white photographs in which she casts herself as a second-rate actress caught in a series of unidentified 50's movie stills, are unsettling and intriguing. She has always, instinctively and by practice, been something of a popster, and I would have thought her far too ironic to dawdle among such mirthless PC robots as these. But she provided the most repellent moment of the show, a counter-achievement in itself.

Sherman's four richly-hued, untitled photo posters depicted grotesque sex dolls from sundry unflinching angles. The vilest of the shots featured a legless synthetic torso with potbelly and sagging breasts surmounted by the fright mask of an old woman. This beldam was reclining in a pinup posture, with her thighs thrown open to reveal a gaping venereal organ. Out of this were flowing a string of dark, unmistakably fecal sausages.

Two other Sherman shots were close-ups of waxen genitalia (one photo of each sex) which looked realistic without being in the least erotic. Writing in the *Village Voice*, Elizabeth Hess referred to these photos as Mr. Penis and Ms. Vagina and went on to suggest cheerfully that Sherman's work here "signals the end of sex as we know it"—a comment which invites a response so obvious I will not bother making it.

Not everything was *quite* so nasty. There was, for instance, Byron Kim's feel-good wall installation, *Synecdoche*, an "ongoing project" of over 200 rectangular panels, each carefully painted to match the skin tone of a particular subject. To me they looked like paint samples at a hardware store, but I defer to the reaction of assistant curator Thelma Goldin, as captured on the Acoustiguide: "It's beautiful, I mean, and, it's, it's, you know, it's almost very sappy, I feel very sappy about it sometimes, but I feel like bursting out and singing, like, 'We are the world.' It's, like, really, like, gorgeous!"

In the face of such blather it may seem futile to insist that paint is something other than an anthropologist's tool. But one of this Biennial's greatest sins was, in fact, its suppression of what remains original and interesting in American painting. There were only a handful of actual canvases in the show, and unfortunately three of them belonged to Suzanne McClelland. Her heavily impastoed near-abstractions looked like the aftermath of some terrible disease: the paint was clotted, smeared, and drooled into place. These scabbed-over surfaces echoed the body-fluid motif of other Biennial works, but otherwise amounted to little more than a search for what one might call the essence of excrescence.

On the other hand (and to finish this summary on a moderately upbeat note), I was surprised that hardly any critical notice was paid to Lari Pittman, one of the few real talents who slipped in with the mob. Pittman's splashy, swirling dreamscapes of words and figures seem to have been included only on the basis of some relatively subdued AIDS allusions which flickered through the canvases. But it was their energy and formal control, not their political references, which made them diverting; Pittman may turn out to be a Basquiat for grown-ups.

IN THE end, though, it was the propaganda, not the paint, that compelled attention. Just about everyone reviewing the show agreed that the art was dull and didactic, an embarrassment even by the Biennial's inverted standards. But beyond that, all was confusion.

Thus, Eleanor Heartney, writing in *Art in America*, appeared distressed that the show "privileged" social message over aesthetic concerns, but then went on to complain that the real problem was

> the way that the Biennial mirrors a widespread tendency today to reduce complex social issues to a politics of identity. . . . By focusing on the psychology of hatred and oppression, this Biennial gives short shrift to crucial political issues like poverty, homelessness, and crime, to say nothing of larger global issues like. . . .

Well, you get the point. For such critics the Biennial failed not by being political, but by not being political enough (at least in the correct way).

Then there were those who, while panning the show on artistic grounds, nevertheless felt compelled to genuflect toward its allegedly high ideals and the Whitney's aims in presenting it. Thus, Deborah Solomon, in her otherwise sensible review in the *Wall Street Journal*, professed: "We'd all like to live in a more equitable society, one free from the indignities of racism and sexism. Yet noble ideals do not necessarily make for noble art. . . ." True—and therefore, why should art critics be required to perform a ritual as meaningless as denouncing "racism and sexism"?

The *New York Times*, which likes box office—and the show, obsessed with sex and skin color, seems to have been a commercial success—obviously felt the need to praise the Whitney's politics of in-

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clusion. Though its critic, Roberta Smith, poked a good deal of fun at "a pious, often arid show that frequently substitutes didactic moralizing for genuine communication," she went on to call this Biennial a "watershed" and "a better show than usual, simply because it [stuck] its neck out." (On the contrary, it all seemed depressingly familiar.)

In short, the reviewers seemed to have trouble deciding where to direct their attacks: was the Biennial a failure because it was misconceived, or because the art it presented just happened to be bad, or were there other possibilities?

Hilton Kramer, dismissing the art in the show out of hand, speculated in the *New York Observer* about the psychology that would lead the museum's wealthy and presumably civilized funders to promote work which assaults their life, their attitudes, their very existence. Of course this is, as Kramer pointed out, an old story by now, but I think it has some contemporary twists. Once upon a time, and that not even so long ago, the agendas of artists on the one hand, and of political activists on the other hand, could still be reasonably differentiated. Now, however, artists and activists are in sync—indeed, they often turn out to be the same people.

For the classes with the money to buy art and support museums, this tends to simplify matters. Feeling compelled by our ideologically-charged climate to do something "committed," they need only fund exhibits like this one. In this connection reconsider the Biennial's many installations, with their video monitors, peepholes, and glimpses of flesh: perhaps, in the wake of this show, we can define the modern voyeur as one who likes to watch other people agitate.

Nevertheless, it cannot be said too often that the art shown at the Whitney was *not* revolutionary; anything but. For the most part it was merely a bunch of dull, talentless experiments scraped together by a pack of undereducated museum bureaucrats. That much, at least, was conceded by most of the critics, and therein lies a glimmer of hope. As time goes by, this Biennial should be remembered, rightly, as a debacle for the cultural Left.

IN FACT, there are already signs, even on the Left, of a gathering disenchantment with politically-correct art. As evidence I point to a review a few months back in the *Village Voice* of Lothar Baumgarten's site-specific show at the Guggenheim. Baumgarten was a student of the German conceptualist prankster Joseph Beuys, and has kept alive Beuys's maddening didacticism. For this installation, Baumgarten painted the names of North American Indian tribes on the inner walls and outer railing of the ramp that spirals skyward through the Guggenheim's famous rotunda. Thus, looking up from the floor one would see a sort of helical marquee of half-forgotten native groups.

The *Voice* usually goes for this sort of sophomoric placard-waving in a big way; but not in this case. While confessing that she "wanted to like this project," the *Voice*'s critic, Kim Levin, made it clear that she was put off by Baumgarten's "righteous ambiguity and vicarious pseudo-ethnic exoticism." She ended her review by quoting the scathing remark of a Polish friend of hers: "Why didn't he just stay home and paint the names of concentration camps on some German museum's walls?"

This in the *Village Voice*! Not since George McGovern proposed invading Cambodia to stop the Khmer Rouge have such tones of sanity been heard on the Left. *Pace* the 1993 Biennial, there may be hope after all.

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The Case for Israel

A PLACE AMONG THE NATIONS: ISRAEL AND THE WORLD. By BENJAMIN NETANYAHU. *Bantam Books. 467 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by PAUL JOHNSON

ONE of the many claims that the newly elected head of the Likud party, Benjamin Netanyahu, has to lead Israel—others are youth, courage, and the will to reform the country's paralytic constitutional structure—is the power of communication. Such a skill is, of course, vital to any statesman of a country uniquely dependent on the good will of influential people throughout the world. Netanyahu has long been seen to possess it, since he is familiar to TV audiences everywhere as a spokesman for Israel's views in moments of Middle East crisis. But his image as a master of the soundbite must now be supplemented by a more formidable accomplishment. He has written what I believe will be widely recognized as by far the most succinct, readable, powerfully argued, and convincing summary of Israel's case. There are many good books about Israel and the Arabs. But *A Place Among the Nations* is the one that those interested in the subject must now read.

Netanyahu's argument tests the premise that no settlement between Israel and the Arabs is possible, let alone likely to be durable, unless it is firmly based on the truth. The central difficulty has always been that the Israelis deal in concrete facts and the Arabs in hyperbolic imaginings. With few exceptions, Israeli negotiators try to stick to realities; and, with few exceptions, Arab negotiators try (albeit often unconsciously, which increases the difficulty) to ignore them. That is the real reason why peace talks always fail.

To compound the problem, the outside world is generally too ignorant of these realities to perceive the fatal dichotomy. The first and most important misapprehension is the failure to grasp the tiny size of Palestine/Israel. This is an old error. Writing in 1869, Mark Twain admitted that actually to visit the place transformed his ideas: "The word Palestine always brought to my mind a vague suggestion of a country as large as the United States. . . . I suppose it was because I could not conceive of a small country having so large a history."

Communicating with TV audiences, Netanyahu discovered that this mistake was still almost universal. Viewers found it hard to credit his assurance that the Arab world is over 500 times the size of the Jewish state, though this is fundamental to Israel's security problem. In his book, then, he takes pains to include maps which bring this aspect of the Israel-Arab dispute vividly to the forefront.

But the gross exaggeration of Israel's physical size—encouraged by Arab propagandists who have never once in half a century published an accurate map of the area—is only one of the untruths which abound. From Netanyahu's chronological survey of the dispute, I have selected ten "Big Lies" which he is particularly anxious to nail.

THE first concerns the psychologically vital question of nomenclature. To contrast Jewish-Israel with Arab-Palestine makes no historical sense at all. The Arabs are in no sense the residual legatees of the Philistines, from whom the word Palestine derives. In the first place, Philistine dominion never extended much beyond the coastal strip from Gaza to present-day Tel Aviv. As a people, the Philistines were wiped out or absorbed by the Babylonian conquerors. It was the Romans who invented the term Palestina, after the Bar Kochba revolt of 135 C.E., to replace Judea, the historic name of the country, and with the intention of obliterating its Jewish identity. The term Palestine was adopted by Christian cartographers but was never used by the territory's own inhabitants until quite modern times.

Second, the Arab presence in Judea was achieved by conquest and occupation. The 7th-century Muslim invasion achieved something which the Romans had failed to do—the uprooting of the Jewish farmer from his soil. As Netanyahu puts it: "It was not the Jews who usurped the land from the Arabs, but the Arabs who usurped the land from the Jews."

Even many well-informed Zionists do not grasp this fact. But it leads logically to the nailing of a third lie: that the creation of Israel was a form of colonization, akin to the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem of the Crusaders or the European colonial empires of modern times, all of which have been swept away by the irresistible forces of history, etc. In reality, as Netanyahu argues, the true analogy is with Spain, where the Muslim-Arab invaders were progressively repulsed, and the country restored to its original integrity.

THE fourth lie or myth is that Zionist Israel was the product of an invasion of Arab Palestine. Yasir Arafat gives the myth its common form: "The Jewish invasion began in 1881. . . . Palestine was then a verdant area, inhabited mainly by an Arab people in the course of building its life and dynamically enriching its indigenous culture." In fact, by 1881 Jews had outnumbered Arabs in Jerusalem for 60 years. All early- and mid-19th-century visitors to the country agree in describing it as a desolate, largely empty countryside, waiting to be developed. Arab immigration

PAUL JOHNSON *is the author of, among other books,* A History of the Jews, A History of Christianity, *and* Modern Times. *He writes a weekly column for the London* Spectator.

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into the territory took place *pari passu* with Jewish settlement, and largely in consequence of it.

The fifth lie Netanyahu exposes is the assertion that Arab opinion is unanimous that Israel's existence is incompatible with Arab rights, prosperity, and happiness. This is the case put by the Arab extremists, who believe in a violent solution, but it has never been democratically endorsed.

Here Netanyahu puts his finger on what I have always regarded as the fatal error of the British Mandate: the decision in 1920 to make the brutally anti-Jewish extremist Haj Amin al-Husseini the Mufti of Jerusalem, although he had only placed fourth in the election to the post, and to compound the mistake by elevating his title to Grand Mufti or Mufti for life. The work of this man and his dreadful family in spreading hatred and inciting violence has never been fully appreciated in the West, and his faction in turn has been succeeded by the Palestine Liberation Organization, another extremist clan committed to war as the only solution.

It is a lamentable fact that Arab terrorism has always been aimed primarily at instilling fear into the Arab population rather than the Jewish one, and that, in consequence, no democratic Arab verdict on how to create a peaceful settlement has ever been possible. But the likelihood is that ordinary Arabs, given the chance, would see with their own eyes the empirical evidence that coexistence of Jews and Arabs, far from being incompatible with Arab aspirations, is essential to their fulfillment.

THE sixth lie, and one which has been largely accepted in the West, is that the very existence of Israel is the prime cause of tension and war throughout the Middle East. My own view is that the reverse is true, which is why I always call Israel the "Militant Peacemaker." As Netanyahu points out, the false proposition was finally disproved, for all the world to see, by the brutal Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait, which had nothing to do with Israel. On the contrary: Israel endured a horrific bombardment by Scud missiles without once responding. This act of aggression by one Arab state against another was the most serious disturbance of peace in the Middle East since World War II, and its reversal required the intervention of virtually the entire international community. It demonstrated that the prime cause of tension in the area is not Israel but inter-Arab rivalry.

That had always been true. Netanyahu provides a table citing nineteen acts of Arab violence against Arab rulers between 1949 and 1992, and another listing eighteen major instances of inter-Arab violence during a single month, April 1985. That Arab governments and organizations are habitually violent is dismally self-evident. Less generally grasped, however, is the fact that most Arab violence is directed against other Arabs, with the Israelis as distressed onlookers.

THE lie that Israel's existence is central to area tensions is compounded by a further, seventh, one, that Israel is also the direct source of aggression. Netanyahu calls this "the reversal of causality" and devotes an interesting chapter setting it right-side-up again, with particular reference to the West Bank. Since many American Jews, and even Israelis, accept the Arab claim that Israel should, in natural justice, "return" the West Bank to "the Palestinians," and that the area should then be cleared of any Jews—not to put too fine a point on it, rendered *Judenrein*—it is important that Netanyahu's demonstration of the right of Jews not merely to live in this territory but to render it secure should be widely read.

Netanyahu's own belief is that the Arabs themselves, fairly consulted, would recognize that right, and this brings him to the eighth myth, widely believed in the West, that Arabs are incapable of democracy. Acceptance of this libel leads Western governments to tolerate the most vicious dictatorships, such as Saddam Hussein's in Iraq, on the ground that they are preferable to "chaos" and "instability." Yet it is precisely the dictatorial nature of Arab regimes which produces inter-Arab aggression and war, as well as periodic assaults on Israel; the growth of Arab democracy, by contrast, would make the greatest single contribution to Middle East peace.

Israelis like Netanyahu, who have spent their adult lives dealing with the Arabs, know their strengths and limitations far better than any outsiders; it is not they who are responsible for the caricature Arab of Western demonology. Quite the contrary: they remain convinced of the fundamental rationality of the Arab peoples, and that is why they retain their faith in an eventual solution satisfactory to both sides.

BUT in the meantime, Israel has to defend itself, and this brings Netanyahu to the ninth lie: the myth of Israeli strength. Despite the high state of training and readiness of the Israeli forces, and their efficient use of such weapons as they possess, the facts of geography make the country highly vulnerable and the facts of economics ensure that Israeli military security will never be more than marginal. As Netanyahu points out, if Israel had not retained the so-called "occupied territories," the Yom Kippur War of 1973 would have extinguished the state. So, far from resting on any inherent strength, Israel, like any other surrounded fortress, must retain what he calls "The Wall," and this fact conditions what peace it can accept.

Finally, Netanyahu turns to the tenth lie: that the inevitability of demographic change makes the Israeli state untenable in the long run. Even in Israel there is a tendency to fall for this one. After the Six-Day War one pundit argued in the newspaper *Ha'aretz* that the West Bank could not be retained because the Arab "rate of natural increase will equalize the population of these two peoples within fourteen years." But in fact, fourteen years later the proportion of Jews to Arabs had barely changed at all, and later predictions of demographic doom which Netanyahu quotes have been similarly disproved.

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of Israel, and its ability to make a decisive contribution to the well-being of the entire area—in which Netanyahu strongly believes—depend not on demography but on policies. It is not so much the number of Jews in Israel who matter, though they are increasing at a speed which would have seemed impossible a decade ago, but the quality of the decisions taken by the Israeli people.

Here we come to the constructive part of Netanyahu's argument: his belief that Israel must break free of the statist straitjacket in which its founders placed it, and so unleash the enormous creative energies of one of the most gifted peoples in world history. But to describe in detail the changes he proposes, Netanyahu would have to write another book. I hope he will.

Heretic

RETHINKING AIDS: THE TRAGIC COST OF PREMATURE CONSENSUS. By ROBERT S. ROOT-BERNSTEIN. *Free Press. 512 pp. $27.95.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL FUMENTO

"ONE of a small but growing group of AIDS heretics" is how Robert Root-Bernstein, a physiologist at Michigan State University, recently described himself in the *Wall Street Journal.* Root-Bernstein is joined in his heresy most notably by the biologist Peter Duesberg at Berkeley, whose views have been publicized in journals ranging from *Policy Review* to the *Atlantic.* Although there are apparent divergences between them, both Duesberg and Root-Bernstein argue that for the last eight years we have been going down the wrong path by treating the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) as necessary to cause AIDS.

Duesberg claims that HIV does not cause AIDS and does not contribute to it in any way, shape, or form; rather, HIV is a harmless "hitchhiker" which somehow manages to find its way into the bodies of persons with immuno-compromised systems. Root-Bernstein is not so quick to dismiss any role for HIV. He grants that there appears to be a strong if incomplete overlap between persons infected with HIV and those who eventually contract and die of AIDS. But his thesis, in a nutshell, is that "HIV is neither necessary nor sufficient to cause AIDS."

Root-Bernstein espouses what has been called the "multiple-hit" theory, according to which repeated blows from such sources as recreational drugs, sexually transmitted diseases, and the antibiotics used to treat those diseases damage the immune system so severely as to allow the opportunistic infections associated with AIDS to strike and kill. "Every person with AIDS for whom there is sufficient documentation," he writes, "has some subset of . . . risk factors" associated with immune suppressants. By failing to look for these co-factors, says Root-Bernstein, scientists have been terribly, terribly remiss. For if we can eliminate those factors, we can essentially eliminate AIDS.

WHY is HIV not *sufficient* to cause AIDS? Taking a tack from Duesberg, Root-Bernstein attributes tremendous scientific importance to the fact that the HIV-AIDS connection does not satisfy Koch's postulates, a system devised a century ago by Robert Koch, a German physician, to establish the relationship between a disease and its suspected cause. But Koch, though a brilliant researcher, was not the epidemiological equivalent of Moses the Lawgiver, and, in any event, viruses had not even been discovered when he formulated his rules.

It is certainly true that the HIV-AIDS link does not satisfy all four of Koch's postulates. In particular "there is no doubt," as Root-Bernstein writes, that it does not satisfy the third postulate: namely, that the microbe in question must be able to induce disease in healthy test animals. But this is only because we are ethically forbidden to use humans as test animals when fatal diseases are involved. Three years ago, I challenged Duesberg to make himself a test animal by injecting himself with purified HIV. He declined.

Root-Bernstein makes much of the fact that HIV does not induce AIDS in chimpanzees and other nonhumans, but we know of a number of pathogens which, being species-specific, are exceptions in this way. The myxomatosis virus, artificially introduced into Australia to control the feral rabbit population, succeeded in killing millions of the animals but no humans. Feline leukemia virus kills huge numbers of cats but their owners are not afflicted. Researchers despaired of finding a test animal to develop treatments for Hansen's disease (leprosy) until someone discovered the disease in armadillos. How can Root-Bernstein not know all this?

TO ESTABLISH the other half of his thesis, that HIV is not *necessary* to cause AIDS, Root-Bernstein claims that persons who develop AIDS "virtually without exception are unhealthy, immuno-compromised people even before they contract HIV and long before they develop AIDS." But the truth of this assertion rests on a hopelessly expansive definition of "unhealthy" and "immuno-compromised." Root-Bernstein spends an entire chapter going down his list of immune suppressants, which include everything from semen to addictive and "recreational" drugs to anesthesia and surgery to prescription drugs to malnutrition to blood transfusions to old age. By the time he is through, practically all of us could be said to be suffering from some sort of immune dysfunction.

There are, however, many levels among the factors that compromise the immune system. Some are so tiny as to show up only in laboratory tests. Others may cause one to be more susceptible to colds, or make a cold last longer than it otherwise would. Only the most severe will expose one to the sorts of life-threatening illnesses that kill AIDS victims.

MICHAEL FUMENTO *is the author of* Science Under Siege: Balancing Technology and the Environment, *recently published by Morrow, and* The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS, *a new edition of which will be brought out by Regnery-Gateway in September.*

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Yet Root-Bernstein essentially treats *all* of these as severe immune suppressants. Thus he cites numerous studies of HIV-negative homosexual men who have "significant reduction in T-4" white blood cells (part of the body's immune system) or "significantly reduced T-cell and B-cell activity." But he neglects to explain what this means, namely, that the reductions were measurable in a laboratory test, not that they necessarily had developed to the point where opportunistic diseases could take hold.

Last year, a friend and I took an unauthorized detour off a Pacific Coast Highway cliff, and she sustained injuries that led to a virtual field day of immune suppression. The contributing factors included shock, brain surgery, anesthesia, the anti-ulcerative medicine Tagamet, antibiotics, a urinary-tract infection from a catheter, multiple blood transfusions, and sudden weight loss. What she did not get was AIDS, or anything resembling it.

Indeed, how could she? Only the most profound immune dysfunction, such as infection with HIV or treatment with a powerful immune-suppressing drug used in transplant operations to prevent organ rejection, opens one up to a disease like PCP pneumonia (which shows up about a third of the time as one of the diseases that lead to a diagnosis of AIDS). Very few PCP cases have ever been recorded in individuals who fall outside these narrowly defined conditions.

RECENTLY a team of researchers decided to test the hypothesis, as stated by Peter Duesberg, that "either drug consumption (frequently associated with malnutrition) by recently established behavioral groups or conventional clinical deficiencies are necessary and sufficient to cause indicator diseases of AIDS." They compared a set of heterosexuals who were heavy drug users but negative for HIV with homosexuals who were heavy drug users and were either positive or negative for the virus. Writing about their results in the March 11, 1993 issue of *Nature* (a date that coincided almost exactly with the publication of *Rethinking AIDS*), the researchers reported that among the homosexuals who were HIV-positive at the beginning of the study, over half had contracted AIDS and most had died. Among the homosexuals who were negative in the beginning and stayed negative, about 2 percent had died but none had been diagnosed with AIDS even when HIV status was excluded as part of the AIDS definition. Among the HIV-negative heterosexuals, less than 1 percent had died and none had gotten AIDS.

In addition to devastating the drug-use-causes-AIDS thesis, this study shows as close a correlation between pathogen and disease as one could ever hope to attain—Koch and his postulates notwithstanding.

Root-Bernstein, of course, can probably offer an explanation of these results; he always does, even though his explanations are often painfully contrived. Consider the famous case of Kimberly Bergalis, a low-risk person who apparently contracted HIV from her dentist and later died of AIDS. She had previously been in good health and said she never took drugs and had never even had sex. According to Duesberg, what killed Bergalis was the anti-viral drug AZT; but this is nonsense, because she began taking AZT only after her immune system had started to plummet. According to Root-Bernstein, on the other hand, she could have lied about using drugs or about other factors.

He may or may not be right about this, but are we now to take the mere possibility that someone is lying as grounds for an at-risk classification? And what about the wives of HIV-infected hemophiliacs and blood-transfusion victims who have been getting HIV and then AIDS? Root-Bernstein would say that they must have done something independently to suppress their own immune systems, but surely there is another, more obvious explanation, namely, sexual intercourse.

ROOT-BERNSTEIN claims that there have been cases of "AIDS without

THE TROUBLED BIRTH OF RUSSIAN DEMOCRACY
Parties, Personalities, and Programs

Michael McFaul
Sergei Markov

ISBN: 0-8179-9231-6, $39.95 cloth
ISBN: 0-8179-9232-4, $24.95 paper
1993, 384 pages

Communism collapsed in the Soviet Union in 1991 not simply because of the reform efforts begun by Mikhail Gorbachev and pushed further by Boris Yeltsin. Since 1988, anticommunist political parties and movements had been forming openly, challenging the communist monopoly on power. These parties nourished the climate for change and ultimately defeated the Soviet military's August 1991 coup d'état. Although little known in the West, these groups are forming the new Russia.

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HIV" and cites what amount to perhaps a few dozen. The disclosure of some of these cases caused quite a stir at the international AIDS conference held last year in Amsterdam. But all diseases share symptoms with other diseases—the more so AIDS, which by definition is a syndrome entailing the manifestation of other diseases. Just as persons who appear to have textbook cases of tuberculosis can test negative for the microbe that causes the disease, persons who look very much as if they have AIDS can fail to test positive for the AIDS virus. But these few dozen cases of "AIDS-without-HIV" must be placed alongside the hundreds of thousands of Americans who appear to have AIDS and who *do* test HIV-positive.

To be sure, there may be co-factors that increase the rate at which HIV decimates the immune system; blocking these co-factors might greatly increase the length and quality of life for affected persons. Despite what Root-Bernstein would have us think, though, scientists have been devoting a great deal of research to finding them. Everything from genetic factors to mental attitude to exposure to sunlight has been explored. One recent study links smoking to a doubling of the speed at which infection progresses to full-blown AIDS, but in general the efforts to identify co-factors have not had much success.

TOWARD the end of *Rethinking AIDS*, Root-Bernstein informs us that even "John Maddox, editor of the eminent journal *Nature*, has written that he should have given critics of the HIV theory, such as Peter Duesberg, room to express their concerns." But in light of the drug-user study I mentioned above, and two more recent articles in *Nature* on the activity of HIV within the body, Maddox has since editorialized that "Duesberg, having led many people with AIDS on a speculative path, should now admit the likelihood that he is mistaken."

In short, the AIDS heretics *have* been given "room to express their concerns," and have been found wanting.

Jane Austen & Other Exploiters

CULTURE AND IMPERIALISM. By EDWARD W. SAID. *Knopf. 380 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by DONALD LYONS

EDWARD SAID, who teaches literature at Columbia University, has specialized in writers about colonialism. His first book was *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography*; his best-known work, *Orientalism*, is a panoramic denunciation of the ways Europe has seen the East. Said has also been more than a literary critic; as "America's foremost spokesman for the Palestinians" (in the words of the *New York Observer*), he served from 1977 to 1991 as a member of the Palestine National Council, an arm of the PLO, and he has written indefatigably celebrating the Palestinian agenda and attacking Israel.

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said undertakes to examine strains of "imperialism" as found in such 19th- and 20th-century English and French writers as Jane Austen, Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad, Albert Camus, and E.M. Forster. After locating the virus, he offers his remedial medicine: something he calls "contrapuntal reading," which comes down to confronting these European artists with political texts from the third world. Then, in a final, disjointed (in every sense) chapter, Said indulges in a prolonged diatribe against United States foreign policy, as manifested especially in the Gulf war.

Before getting down to individual cases, Said floats the hypothesis of a genetic linkage between the fact of empire and the genre of the novel. "The novel," he writes, "as a cultural artifact of bourgeois society, and imperialism are unthinkable without each other." As support for this sweeping charge he offers little beyond the vulgar-Marxist statement that:

> . . . the 19th-century English novels stress the continuing existence (as opposed to revolutionary overturning) of England. Moreover, they *never* advocate giving up the colonies, but take the long-range view that since they fall within the orbit of British dominance, *that* dominance is a sort of norm, and thus conserved along with the colonies.

In other words, it is the duty of art to advocate domestic revolution and colonial divestment; failing that duty, art endorses evil. QED.

Much of the book consists of a random survey of the ways in which novels can intersect with empire or overseas realms in general. Such interactions can range from trips merely reported or alluded to (such as those of Magwitch in Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* or Sir Thomas Bertram in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* or Ralph Touchett in Henry James's *Portrait of a Lady*) to full-scale, on-site colonial narratives like Kipling's *Kim* or Conrad's *Nostromo* or Forster's *A Passage to India*. But in fact Said's coverage is neither thorough nor representative. He never considers a writer's work as a whole—is Jane Austen's inoffensively domestic *Emma*, for example, tainted by consanguinity with *Mansfield Park*?—and he misses a trick by, apparently, not knowing Anthony Trollope's *The Bertrams*, in which a family actually voyages to the Middle East. Most egregiously, perhaps, there is the neglect of *other* empires—most notably, the Russian. In extenuation, Said pleads the fact that he "was born, grew up, and now live[s]" in the Western orbit. Yet to omit Tolstoy from a study of novel and empire is to sacrifice elementary statistical rigor.

BUT let us look at a few of Said's dealings with the writers he does include. Jane Austen is the first to undergo sustained inquiry. *Mansfield Park* (1814), though perfunctorily lauded as a "great novel," is in the line of fire because its patriarch, Sir Thomas Bertram, owns an estate in Antigua, an estate that according to Said "would have had

DONALD LYONS, *a new contributor, is the theater critic for the* New Criterion *and the author of* Independent Visions, *a book about American movies, which is being brought out by Ballantine in the fall.*

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to be a sugar plantation maintained by slave labor." There are no scenes set in Antigua, of course; the West Indian estate functions solely as a device to get Sir Thomas offstage so that the young folk can feel free to misbehave. But in Said's eyes, Austen "sublimates [*sic*] the agonies of Caribbean existence to a mere half-dozen references to Antigua." This would seem to mean—clarity of expression is not one of Said's virtues—that *Mansfield Park* should have concentrated on the realities of sugar-growing; in other words, Jane Austen is guilty of not having been Emile Zola.

Rudyard Kipling to the witness stand. Said does allow as how "*Kim* [1901] is a work of great aesthetic merit; it cannot be dismissed simply as the racist imagining of one disturbed and ultra-reactionary imperialist." But if the death penalty may be forgone, a severe sentence is still in order, for *Kim* enthusiastically, joyously embraces the British empire and its Great Game of anti-Russian espionage, into which little Kim O'Hara is an eager inductee. If in the end *Kim* gets off relatively lightly, it is largely because even Said cannot help warming to the book's high spirits and its palpable love of India and Indians.

Poor Conrad gets no such break. *Nostromo* (1904), an epic novel about revolution and greed and exploitation in a small, imaginary South American country, is unqualifiedly anti-imperialist, and even contains a devastating satire of Yankee economic smugness ("We shall run the world's business whether the world likes it or not"). This Said duly relishes, declaring that "no American has been immune to this structure of feeling." (It is characteristic of Said to utter such lurid generalizations about Americans while taking violent umbrage at any and all generalizations about Arabs.) But Conrad dares to criticize not only the predatory West but also venal and cynical native independence movements—and for this "paternalistic arrogance" he is not to be excused. One must be not only respectful of but upbeat about liberation organizations.

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Yet even Conrad is not treated so harshly as Albert Camus, whose novels *The Stranger* (1942) and *The Plague* (1947) are set in his native Algeria and concentrate on French people there. Camus's real offense, though, as Said makes abundantly clear, lies outside his novels: the French writer "publicly and even vehemently opposed the nationalist demands for Algerian independence." For this sin, Camus's limitations as a writer (about which Said can write perceptively) are deemed "unacceptably paralyzing." Similarly, E.M. Forster in *A Passage to India* is condemned less for his art than for what are, in his case, perversely deemed to be insufficiently enthusiastic opinions about Indian independence.

THIS brings us to Said's scheme of "contrapuntal reading," which amounts to correcting old novels by juxtaposing them with later political propaganda:

> We *must* [emphasis added] . . . read the great canonical texts, and perhaps also the entire archive of modern and premodern European and American culture, with an effort . . . to give emphasis and voice to what is silent or marginally present or ideologically repressed.

In practice, *Culture and Imperialism* applies this punitive confrontationalism only fitfully and grotesquely. Thus, the writers Said suggests as counterpoints to Jane Austen are Frantz Fanon, the French West Indian psychoanalyst and later Algerian politician whose book *The Wretched of the Earth* is an unremitting call to violence, and Amílcar Cabral, the Guinean agitator whom Said himself admits to being in the grip of "animosity and violence, . . . *ressentiment* and hate." Camus is to be corrected not only by Fanon but by Jean Genet, whose posturings with the National Liberation Front in Algeria and the PLO are somehow supposed to constitute a counterpoise to Camus's great and deeply humane novels.

This whole grim program amounts to a reeducation camp for Western classics where loudspeakers blare theoretical texts all night long. And almost all the corrective texts Said discusses *are* theoretical. Despite his glamorous reputation as a literary critic, nowhere in this book is there any substantial discussion of post-colonial literature from Africa or Asia or South America. An eager student, sensibly desiring to supplement his reading of, say, Conrad or Kipling or Tolstoy with a Nigerian or Indian or Peruvian or Afghan novel will get no help from Said, beyond the odd laundry list of correct names.

IN THE last part of *Culture and Imperialism*, Said drops all pretense of literary or cultural criticism and looses a shrill tirade against the "coldness and cruelty" of America, as evinced in its "imperial war against the Iraqi people." (To be sure, Said covers his rear by uttering an occasional *pro-forma* criticism of a Saddam Hussein or a Khomeini.) There remain here in America, we gather, but ten just souls, in the likes of "journalists like Alexander Cockburn, Christopher Hitchens, Seymour Hersh, and in the tireless work of Noam Chomsky." (On the jacket of this book, tireless Chomsky duly praises it for its "compassion.") The spectacle of Said's inchoate and redundant abuse of the West is all the sadder in this hour when any nascent democratic forces in the Arab world need to be encouraged to escape from just the brand of dogma, rancor, and paranoia embodied in this book.

Bombers

RADS: THE 1970 BOMBING OF THE ARMY MATH RESEARCH CENTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN AND ITS AFTERMATH. By TOM BATES. *HarperCollins. 465 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

AMONG the many changes ushered in by the election of Bill Clinton has been a rather dramatic shift in America's political culture. This is most apparent in the palpable nostalgia for the values, causes, personalities, and even the drugs of the 1960's. Hippie garb has made a comeback as high fashion; the children of the Berrigans, Kunstlers, and Cleavers have been featured on the style pages of major newspapers; the memoirs of former Black Panthers have received respectful reviews, their authors treated as serious leaders of the struggle for racial equality; and marijuana and, to a lesser degree, LSD have won renewed popularity.

The 60's nostalgists themselves are not members of a younger generation in search of causes and commitments, but the men and women who actually lived through those years. Many of them are bitter about the scorn in which their youthful "idealism" was held during the era of conservative political ascendancy, and are now determined to recast the image of the 60's as a time of high principles, dedication to change, and fun.

The project is not without its perils, however, especially since even many liberals today regularly identify the "excesses" of the 60's as a major reason for the Democratic party's quarter-century of malaise. Indeed, one sympathetic observer, E.J. Dionne of the *Washington Post*, has already issued a word of caution, noting that there were "aspects of the 60's that were just plain mean" and worrying about "the silliest things that were said back then," including the New Left's celebration of revolutionary violence.

Violence was, of course, not only talked about, it was almost routinely resorted to during the latter stages of the antiwar movement. The most notorious, and tragic, incident was the 1970 bombing of the Army Mathematics Research Center at the University of Wisconsin; the bombing caused the death of Robert Fassnacht, a young, brilliant, apolitical researcher who happened to be conducting studies in the building at 3 A.M. when the attack took place. *Rads* tells the story of that event.

Until the Army Math bombing, no one had died from violent acts committed by the antiwar movement. Nevertheless, by 1970 the New Left had clearly jettisoned its earlier policy of nonviolence, and

ARCH PUDDINGTON *works for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in New York and is the author of* Failed Utopias.

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the tone of radical politics was being set by the Weathermen and Black Panthers. While these two groups were not active at Wisconsin, the political violence they celebrated was increasingly viewed on campus as an acceptable way to express opposition to the Vietnam war. On several occasions the university had received national attention as the result of rough clashes between students and police—including an ugly episode in which a Dow Chemical Corporation recruiter was chased from the campus—and a series of bombings which preceded the explosion at Army Math.

The attack itself was carried out by four young antiwar enthusiasts: Karleton Armstrong, his brother Dwight, Leo Burt, and David Fine. Only Burt and Fine were students at the time; Armstrong, the instigator of the action, was a sometime student who took maximum advantage of the university's relaxed attitude toward undergraduates with poor grades and records of dropping-out.

Although much of Bates's book focuses on Armstrong, the motivation for his political radicalism is never really explained. The son of working-class parents from Madison, Armstrong was not part of the student intellectual Left; when he discussed the war or politics generally, he tended to repeat the clichés of the day. Armstrong was also responsible for several other bombings on and around the campus, including a New Year's Eve expedition in which he and his brother stole a private airplane and made an unsuccessful raid on Badger Ordnance, a big munitions plant near Madison. In all these encounters, Armstrong displayed a mind-boggling lack of concern for the possible consequences, eventually coming to enjoy the notion of himself as a revolutionary who committed acts of violence in the cause of peace.

Yet if the blithely irresponsible Armstrong was most directly to blame for the death of Robert Fassnacht, a heavy share of overall guilt must fall on the shoulders of those in the antiwar movement who condoned, excused, and even encouraged the violent acts committed by their impressionable young followers. The university mood was vividly reflected in an editorial which appeared just prior to the bombing of Army Math in the *Daily Cardinal*, a student newspaper. The editorial declared that if violent acts "are needed to strike fear into once fearless men and rid this campus once and for all of repressive and deadly ideas and institutions, then so be it."

THESE, of course, were the words of students (albeit members of a generation which was, at the time, widely judged to be one of the most impressive America had ever produced). But what of their counselors—the teachers, clergymen, writers, and theorists who established the intellectual and moral tone of the movement? Although the Wisconsin bombing drew the condemnation of many antiwar activists and was disavowed by almost all liberal opponents of the war, a number of the most influential leaders of the movement came forward to testify in Karleton Armstrong's behalf at his deportation hearing in Canada, where he had fled, or later at his trial in Madison.

Thus, the former Catholic priest Philip Berrigan observed that "Christ never said anything against the so-called violent revolutionaries." To Daniel Ellsberg, the bombing was "misguided" but nonetheless "conscientious." Staughton Lynd compared it to John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, another incident which had produced "accidental and unintended deaths." Noam Chomsky advanced the theory that, because of its conduct of the war in Vietnam, the United States had forfeited the right to prosecute antiwar activists. Chomsky came perilously close to welcoming bombing and similar acts on the grounds that violence exhausted the will of the ruling elites.

Other witnesses prominent in academic and antiwar circles spoke in a similar vein. Gabriel Kolko said that to condemn Armstrong was to condemn "an entire anguished generation." Howard Zinn spoke of those who "rebelled out of important and good and social motives." Anthony Russo said dissenters like Armstrong "may be the only difference between the way history views us and the way it viewed Nazi Germany." This theme was also taken up by Richard Falk, who declared that American political leaders and those corporate executives who contributed to the war effort were potential candidates for Nuremberg trials.

Taken together, the testimonies of Armstrong's defenders—combining vacuousness, self-importance, cynicism, and historical ignorance—constitute a summary statement of the moral and intellectual condition of the antiwar community. The statements also reflect a callousness noteworthy in a movement which had claimed the mantle of peace and brotherhood. Indeed, there can be little doubt that had Fassnacht been conducting research of direct use to the military, some of Armstrong's witnesses would have condoned his death as that of a war criminal.

True enough, the Berrigans, Ellsbergs, and Chomskys were not merely opposed to the war but actually favored a Communist victory,

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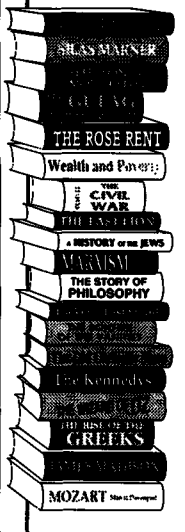

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and their views therefore did not reflect the more moderate sentiments of Americans who only wanted the United States to withdraw from the conflict. But it is also true that what amounted to a pro-Communist perspective did predominate within the active antiwar movement during its later phase. Even those who were genuinely appalled at the Army Math bombing, who mourned Fassnacht's death, and who believed that the antiwar movement bore some responsibility for the tragedy, qualified their judgment by also citing the government, the war, and the sickness of the American soul.

TOM BATES, a graduate student at Wisconsin around the period of the bombing and a New Left activist, has written a thorough and generally honest account. He is a sympathetic observer, but to his credit his sympathies encompass almost all of the participants, including the harried university administrators, the campus police who bore the brunt of demonstrations gone out of control, and the prosecutors who brought Armstrong to justice. (Armstrong was sentenced to 23 years, and served nearly seven; his brother and David Fine drew lesser terms, while Leo Burt disappeared in Canada and was never seen again.)

On the face of it, the Army Math bombing, although certainly a fascinating story in itself, would seem to have little relevance to American politics today. For the veterans of 60's politics, the period of New Left violence is a subject best avoided, and those who are so impudent as to remind them of it are castigated for unfairly exploiting the excesses while ignoring the achievements of the period.

Yet there are lessons in this story worth pondering. If some revolutionaries, like Karleton Armstrong, are regarded today as little more than curiosity pieces, others, particularly if they are black and/or female, can still command the respect of the liberal culture. One such is Elaine Brown, a former Black Panther leader whose activist years were steeped in violence, not only between the Panthers and the police but between the Panthers and other black radical groups and within the Panther movement itself. Yet her recently published memoir, *A Taste of Power*, has been lavishly praised, and she herself has been the subject of laudatory profiles in the *New York Times Magazine* and elsewhere.

Then there is the question of the influence still wielded on the young by veterans of radical movements. Although the adult figures prominent today on the campus Left are not goading students toward acts of nihilistic rage, they continue to fill their minds with ideas just as irresponsible as those imbibed by undergraduates 25 years ago—ideas about race, about relations between the sexes, about Western civilization, and about American society. The Army Math bombing may have brought the 60's to a close (as one reviewer of this book put it), but the legacy of that period haunts us still.

What Ails Us

OUT OF CONTROL: GLOBAL TURMOIL ON THE EVE OF THE 21ST CENTURY. By ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI. *Scribner's. 240 pp. $21.00.*

Reviewed by JOSHUA MURAVCHIK

THE tremors and aftershocks from the earthquake that swallowed up the Soviet empire have not yet ceased. Not only is the Soviet region itself still in turmoil, but even here, far from the epicenter, the political ground continues to rumble beneath our feet, pushing up new formations. A recent instance is the new book by Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Adviser to President Jimmy Carter and a leading light of U.S. foreign policy. *Out of Control* aims to describe the political dynamics of the post-cold-war world; it is also interesting for what it reveals about Brzezinski's own political evolution.

Although he served a liberal President, Brzezinski has been regarded as leaning more to the conservative side. The various memoirs of the Carter administration, not least Brzezinski's own, *Power and Principle*, make it clear that he took a conservative or hard-line position in a long series of internecine battles over policy. In 1988, he broke with the Democratic party to endorse George Bush for President over Michael Dukakis.

Brzezinski's first vocation was as a Sovietologist. As a collaborator of the late Carl J. Friedrich, he was one of those who helped to develop the concept of totalitarianism, and he remained immune to fashionable equivocations about the realities of the Communist experiment. "It was especially due to the efforts of Brzezinski," note Seymour Martin Lipset and Gyorgy Bence in a recent paper, "that the totalitarian interpretation never lost touch with Soviet developments."

But now, while most conservatives are still basking in the West's victory in the cold war, Brzezinski has come to deliver a warning: far from ushering in the end of history, the conclusion of the cold war may mark the onset of a new time of troubles.

What Brzezinski sees is a world divided between rich and poor. The rich—meaning citizens of the West and especially the United States—are decadent. They live in a "permissive cornucopia," defined here as "a society in which everything is permitted and everything can be had." It is a society in which God is dead and in which television "is rapidly replacing the roles traditionally played by the family, by the church, by the school." Above all, it is a society characterized by the absence of self-control and the breakdown of "social criteria of moral discernment."

On the other side, the poor are numerous and growing more so. Moreover, thanks to the wonders of modern communication, they are more aware of the rich, and of their own comparative disadvantage, than ever before. "A politically awakening world is less and less likely to tolerate massive disproportions in the conditions of life," remarks Brzezinski. As a re-

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK *is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and the author of* Exporting Democracy: Fulfilling America's Destiny.

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sult, "inequality" has become "the central issue of our times."

WHAT should be our response to all this? In the first place, writes Brzezinski, America "must accept the reality and even the necessity of some gradual readjustment in the distribution of global power and wealth." But even if we were not ready to relinquish some of our power, our ability to exercise world leadership would be constrained by our internal rot. Power, Brzezinski notes, is not tantamount to authority, and America lacks authority because others find its hedonistic culture unworthy of respect.

America's decay is manifest in a list of twenty "basic dilemmas" that Brzezinski enumerates. These run the gamut from the budget and trade deficits to inadequate health care and deteriorating infrastructure to crime, poverty, racism, multiculturalism, and gridlock. Solutions to these dilemmas, Brzezinski believes, can come only secondarily from governmental action or any other quick fix. What "America clearly needs" is "a period of philosophical introspection and of cultural self-critique"—in short, a spiritual rebirth.

Yet despite the need for such a rebirth, in Brzezinski's judgment it is highly unlikely that we will see "a return to the traditional centrality of institutionalized and formal religion." Then what can be the source of renewal? Its seeds lie in "the West's ecological movement," which may be "auguring the emergence of a broader acceptance of the principle of self-denial as the point of departure for a globally shared moral consensus."

In Brzezinski's view, ecology and equality are linked because "the most egregious offenders" against the environment have been the rich nations. ("It is in Europe and North America that a number of species have already been wiped out in their entirety.") Thus, the rich must learn self-denial both in order to help the poor and in order to alleviate the "ecological problem" which is "ultimately threatening all of humanity."

Self-restraint on the part of the West should extend beyond economics and ecology. The West has been guilty of a "patronizing and parochial" attitude, considering itself to be "inherently superior, not only on the level of economic development but in political maturity." In addition to becoming more humble in its attitude and more circumspect in its advice to the rest of the world, the United States must yield to changes in international politics.

"The UN's time has finally come," declares Brzezinski: we must work for "the deliberate enhancement of the UN's political role, even at some cost to the unilateral power of some presently dominant states." Indeed, we must look beyond strengthening the UN to "a progressive expansion in the scope of the authority wielded by the various [international] bodies"—because "the only long-term alternative to global anarchy is some form of a global confederal structure."

THESE themes—Western guilt, American decline, environmentalism, inequality, world confederation—have been more popular among liberals than among conservatives in recent decades. If sounding them demonstrates a courage to think afresh in the light of dramatic changes in world politics, Brzezinski is to be applauded. But are the thoughts themselves persuasive?

In one of his passages on inequality, Brzezinski refers to "the gulf in the texture of life" between the rich and the poor nations. By this he means life "both in its material and in its spiritual dimensions." This is odd because, in writing about the rich nations everywhere else in the book, Brzezinski emphasizes their spiritual poverty, rooted in the "permissive cornucopia." The poor, however, do not suffer from this cornucopia, and if they have spiritual problems, he does not mention them, leaving the reader to infer that the poor are richer spiritually.

But are they? Brzezinski laments the violence to which the children in rich countries are subject when

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they watch television, but some of the violence that our rich children see (if they ever watch news programs) is being committed by poor children in places like Somalia, the Sudan, India, Sri Lanka, and Bosnia. It is violence committed for the sake of plunder and for the sake of hatred, which suggests that sins like greed and racism are no more unique to the rich than is violence.

BRZEZINSKI's prescription for America's spiritual ills is hardly more compelling than his diagnosis. "A community that partakes of no shared absolute certainties . . . is a community threatened by dissolution." But is environmentalism a more likely source of absolute certainties than traditional religion? Let us hope not, for an environmentalism that is not based on science is mischievous, and science eschews absolute certainties.

Nor is Brzezinski convincing when he argues that America's ills, spiritual and economic, prevent it from exercising international leadership. In the 1940's, the United States (with its allies) rallied to prevent first Hitler and then Stalin from conquering Europe. The standard of living of the average American in that decade was roughly one-third of what it is today; indices of health, education, and the like were appreciably lower than what we now enjoy. As for our spiritual ills, our greatest one, racism, was virulent and endemic: Jim Crow prevailed in the armed forces and in the nation's capital. If, despite such domestic drawbacks, America was equal to the global challenges of the day, why, apart from want of will, can it not meet today's far easier ones?

About Brzezinski's proposed solutions to global problems I have my doubts as well. If the UN's time has come, one would not know it from following the agony in Bosnia. Inflated estimates of the world body arose in the wake of the Persian Gulf crisis, but in that conflict the UN was important only as a vehicle for a determined American policy. As for wealth transfers from the rich nations to the poor, a great deal of evidence suggests that these yield little benefit, and that the key to development can be found not in charity but in market economics.

Finally, I am especially disappointed in Brzezinski's apparent loss of interest in the democratic revolution. A member of the board of the National Endowment for Democracy, Brzezinski has been one of the few among the foreign-policy elite to take the democracy issue to heart. Now he writes dismissively that "notions of 'democracy' are fashionable." When he asserts "the need for a globally shared concept of the meaning of the good life," he invests his hopes not in democracy—which has spread within the last nineteen years from about twenty countries to about eighty—but in environmentalism, arguably a more "fashionable" cause these days than democracy, and arguably much less likely to provide a basis for the global consensus he seeks.

Brzezinski's warnings are a tonic for complacency about the end of history. But his sour assessment of America's present condition makes for a discordant postscript to the great victory of the West in the cold war, and offers little hope for the future.

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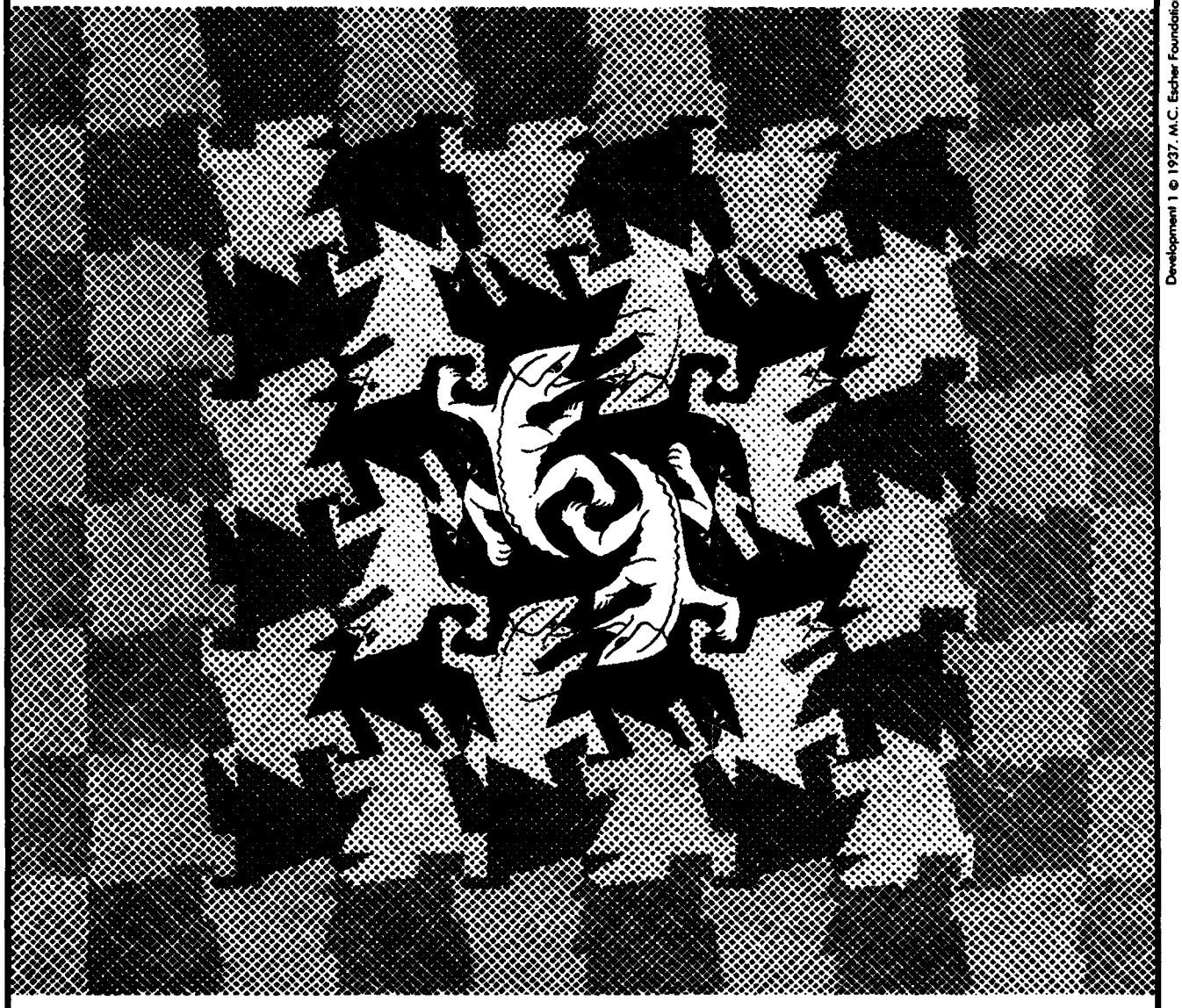

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